

**The
Writings
of**

W. Carl Ketcherside

Volume 3 • Other Essays

Bible Talk
Restoration Review
Mission Journal
Christian Standard
Integrity
Ensign

Stone-Campbell e-Prints

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May 2024

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

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This volume contains a collection of 223 original essays by Carl Ketcherside, most of which were written after he ceased publishing his own journal, *Mission Messenger*, in December of 1975.

During the early period of his life, Ketcherside came to hold beliefs that are common to Churches of Christ with roots in the Stone-Campbell restoration movement. Influenced by Daniel Sommer, whose thinking reflected that of the majority of nineteenth century congregations that later became known as Churches of Christ, Ketcherside was opposed to the one-man pastor system. However, when the “mainline” churches abandoned that view, early in the twentieth century, those churches with which Ketcherside was associated did not.

Ketcherside's opposition to the pastor system became widely known through his debates with G. K. Wallace, who championed the mainline position. Subsequently, Ketcherside was maligned by his opponents as a “hobbyist,” resulting in his being largely ignored as an outsider by mainline churches.

In an interview conducted by Tom Olbricht, in July of 1968, eleven years after Ketcherside began to publicize his revised views on fellowship, Ketcherside responded to Olbricht's question, “What is your attitude on those positions you held before turning to unity interests?”

I am afraid I shall have to plead guilty to retaining most of them. I did not change my views but I altered my attitude toward those brethren who do not share them. They are all my beloved brethren regardless of what they think about instrumental music, support of Herald of Truth, orphan homes, cups, classes, colleges, the millennium, or all of our other problems that plague us. I do not recognize as valid the factional barriers we have erected. God did not create them. I am greatly ashamed that at one time in my life I would not have called upon you to lead in prayer or to speak in one of my meetings. At that time I mistook fellowship for endorsement, conformity for community, and factional alliance for brotherhood. We still differ about many things, but now you are very precious unto me and so are all of God's children. I shall not measure their loyalty to Jesus by concurrence with my deductions from the scriptures. I have learned that tolerance is not the endorsement of any thing that is wrong, but the endurance of one who thinks it is right.¹

The sentiment expressed above will be recognized as a common thread running throughout this volume.

Ketcherside's essays in this volume are among his best, having been written, for the most part, from the perspective of an editor whose thinking had matured over a period of 36 years of challenges from his opponents. Of the many aphorisms to come from his pen, one in particular seems best to summarize the objective underlying both his mission and his message:

We are today exactly where our thinking has brought us.
We will be tomorrow exactly where our thinking takes us.

It is with that thought in mind that I have desired to share with others the writings of Carl Ketcherside, whose thinking has been invaluable to me over the years.

Editor, Stone-Campbell *e* Prints

May 24, 2024

END NOTES

1. Thomas H. Olbricht, “W. Carl Ketcherside,” *Mission Journal* 1 (July 1968): 27.

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Bible Talk

by W. Carl Ketcherside

Journals

The following essays by Carl Ketcherside were originally published in Volume 6 (1958) of *Bible Talk*, edited by Leroy Garrett, Denton, Texas.

- **A Christian Church Explains Its Membership**
- **Principles Governing Fellowship in the N.T. Ekklesia**
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A Christian Church Explains Its Membership

Bible Talk 7 (April 1958): 114-15

Bible Talk

In order that there may be a clear understanding of the method of receiving members into the Christian Church now being formed in Florissant, the Steering Committee of the Disciples of Christ in the Florissant area recommends that the following become the membership policy of this new congregation:

For one who presents himself for membership by confession of faith in Jesus Christ, it shall be the policy of this congregation to follow the practice of the New Testament church of baptizing by immersion, symbolizing the burial and resurrection of our Lord.

For one who desires to transfer his membership from another congregation, he may do so by bringing a letter from the church of which he has been a member, or, by stating where his previous membership has been.

Should any person come by transfer, not having been previously baptized by immersion, he shall be offered an explanation of the meaning of the practice of this congregation to baptize by immersion and shall be requested to be so baptized. However, if he does not find it in his heart to be immersed, membership shall not be denied him.

The congregation shall include him because it recognizes him as a Christian whom it welcomes to its worship, to its communion table, to its fellowship meetings, and, from it is willing to receive the benefit of his talents and his treasure. Since this congregation recognizes other churches in addition to itself as being Christian and expects to work interdenominationally with other communions, it believes that it should welcome every Christian who requests the privilege of transferring his membership into this congregation. This church considers itself to be part of the church universal.

Consequently, it opens its doors to all who desire membership in it as stated above.

Ketcherside's Objections

1. It substitutes a Steering Committee composed of uninspired men for the inspired ambassadors of our Lord, who were empowered by him to reveal the will of the King relative to citizenship in the kingdom.

2. It substitutes a “membership policy” for the new covenant scriptures as a basis for determination of admission to the table of the Lord.

3. It affirms that the practice of the New Testament church was to immerse those who confessed faith in the Lord, and then proposes to accept those who repudiate the practice of the N.T. church, thus forfeiting any right to a claim of seeking to restore said church in faith and practice.

4. It employs misleading and ambiguous language, such as “It shall be the policy of this congregation to follow the practice of the New Testament church of baptizing by immersion” which is equivalent to saying “baptizing by baptizing” or “immersing by immersion”; and by the use of such language implies that

there are other means of baptizing.

5. It leaves the terms of admission to fellowship to the will of the individual and not to the will of God, and makes what one finds in his heart the law of obedience, rather than what he finds in the revealed will of God.

6. It recognizes as Christian those who are not in Christ Jesus in the fair import of that term in the revealed oracles of God.

7. It reverses the divine order by expressing willingness to receive talent and treasure from one who has not first given himself to God (2 Corinthians 8:5).

8. It confesses that the Florissant Christian Church is merely another denomination, on which basis it forfeits all hope of uniting all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ in a non-sectarian and non-denominational sense, insofar as the Florissant Christian Church is concerned.

9. By confessing that it is a part of the church universal, it commits itself to the admission that it is a party or sect, and thus exists in contravention to the will of God, and not in conformity thereto.

10. In opening its doors on the basis of the membership policy as drawn up by the Steering Committee it has created a human creed, and will only serve to divide believers, rather than to answer the prayer of our Lord. —W. Carl Ketcherside, 2360 Gardner Dr., St. Louis 21, Mo.

Principles Governing Fellowship in the N.T. Ekklesia

Bible Talk 7 (April 1958): 115-16

Bible Talk

1. In an absolute monarchy, the terms of admission to citizenship, or fellowship, must be established by the Sovereign, and accepted and enforced by the citizens in conformity with the will of the Sovereign as revealed.

2. Any wilful or deliberate attempt upon the part of the citizens of such a monarchy to ignore, alter, or amend the terms of fellowship prescribed by the Sovereign will constitute a revolt against his authority, and must be regarded as an act of rebellion.

3. In any commonwealth composed of members called out of a previous state or condition, necessity requires that there be a law of naturalization, and such law must provide a specific point at which the applicant for citizenship achieves transition from his former state to the new state, and at which point he becomes a partaker of all the rights, privileges and prerogatives of the new state.

4. In a commonwealth depending for existence upon a mutual regard of the citizens for the authority of the Sovereign, and a mutual respect for each other, it is imperative that all be able to determine who are citizens, and who are not; for the

rejection of those who are citizens, and the acceptance of those who are not, will destroy the commonwealth by disregard for authority at the very entrance to the commonwealth, and by infiltration of those who do not regard the will of the Sovereign as supreme in their conduct.

5. Inasmuch as finite creatures are unable to read the hearts of men, or to judge the degree or extent of faith of others in a proposition, a community, or fellowship, established upon faith, must have a visible and overt act which may serve as a test of such faith, and thus of admissibility to the fellowship, and such an act must be specific and established by decree of the Sovereign.

6. A law of naturalization established as an ordinance of induction or translation must be such that all who are entitled to the privileges it is intended to convey, may freely comply with its requirements, and a proper subject complying with the ordinances, is inducted into that state to which the ordinance is intended to induct, whether he understands the design or not.

7. Every organization must repel and exclude from itself those forces, which, if tolerated, would work toward the deterioration, disintegration, and eventual destruction of the organization, or organism. Example: Physical body— cancer, peritonitis. Nation or state— treason, sedition.

8. In an absolute monarchy, the will of the Sovereign must determine who is unworthy of remaining in the community established by his authority, and such as are decreed by His will to be unworthy, must be excluded by the members of the community, or the entire community may be adjudged in a state of revolt or rebellion, leading to anarchy. Exceptions in the N.T. ekklesia: (a) A minority group who do not espouse a false doctrine and who are intolerant of evil may still be saved, by remaining faithful to the end, and (b) Individuals may live worthy of the Christ and be saved, even though a congregation

as such may be judged unworthy.

Objections to One Man Ministry

Bible Talk (May 1958): 126

Bible Talk

The present practice of hiring at a stipulated sum a preacher to be the minister of a congregation of the saints of God, and to be the recognized dispenser of truth in their behalf, and the authorized director of their public praise service to God, we deem to be nefarious and inimical to the welfare of the social structure of the congregation. It is not a question of how we can dress up such a system and retain it, but how we can reveal it in its true light and reject it. It is not the abuse of the system by occasional unscrupulous practitioners which we oppose, but the system itself, constituting as it does one vast abuse of God's program. While time and space do not permit the filing of many scriptural and valid objections we submit the following which we esteem worthy of your analysis.

1. It Opposes God's Purpose in Christianity

Religion, like the sabbath, was made for man, and not man for religion. It belongs to sinful man, to man who, having become separated from the Creator, requires some bond by which he can be drawn into communion with Him who is the source of all spiritual power, energy and strength. Within each man dwells a spirit, the grandeur of which cannot be measured by finite thought. It is the image of God, distorted, cramped and

hidden perhaps, but nonetheless striving to be freed from its vault of sin, to unfold in its beauty, and to go on unto perfection. Like a plant hidden in a dungeon, yet sending forth frail tendrils toward a crack of light filtering in, so the spirit imprisoned in the blackness of a life steeped in evil, still watered by conscience, “reaches blindly above it for light.”

Christianity is the product of Him who is a spirit, devised by a divine intelligence, communicated to men of finite powers, and destined to free their own spirits, and to perfect them for eternal existence in a purified fellowship. Since man is a rational being as distinguished from dumb brutes, any system which provides for soul culture must be one adapted to man’s needs in his present condition and which commends itself to his intellectual powers. That Christianity is neither adapted to angels or demons we could easily prove, and that it is adapted to man in his present state is clearly demonstrable. It is designed to enable one who has the power of acting on, determining and forming himself, to cultivate a nature suitable to residence in heaven.

To cultivate a thing is to make it grow. Nothing admits of culture except that which has in it a principle of life or vigor, and is capable of being expanded. Christianity is the practice of soul culture, by which one unfolds his divinely provided powers and capabilities to become a vigorous, well-proportioned, happy being, whose relation to this earth is that of a stranger and pilgrim, and who therefore continually seeks for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. It is peculiarly adapted to its purpose. It provides an atonement or expiation for sin and thus removes any thought of guilt complex; it holds out a perfect exemplar in a person who was tempted in all points as ourselves, yet was without sin; it stimulates to a career of philanthropy, benevolence and grace, thus crushing out the weeds of envy, prejudice, hate and selfishness, which all cramp the soul; it offers a future reward for striving, a goal of such tremendous value as to dwarf all we have envisioned in

comparison.

The very purpose and nature of Christianity compels it to place emphasis upon the individual. Previous to its advent the masses of men were looked upon merely as chattels. Huge armies moved like dread automatons across gory battlefields. Men belonged to the state. Those who were born in certain stations in life were doomed there to remain. There was no dignity in human personality. "The quarry slave scourged to his dungeon" was less appreciated than the stolid ox. The Roman social set gathered in the Colosseum and watched as gladiators hacked each other to pieces for their entertainment. Even in religion, fettered by superstition, ignorance and tradition, men in general were the pawns of a clever and diabolical priestcraft.

Obviously the first task was to restore the sense of value of the soul. Man had little desire to cultivate soil so little esteemed. But the cross of Christ changed all of that, for upon it the Son of God died for every man. It was thus seen the tremendous estimate which heaven placed upon the individual soul. The message of Christianity was addressed "to every creature." Responsibility was again charged to "every soul of man" (Rom. 2:6-11). And it was based upon the potent fact that "there is no respect of persons with God."

The soul was freed from the necessity of spiritual subservience to an earthly priesthood in which a mere man through fear or superstition dominated the spirits of others. Every Christian composed "a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5). All are equally expected to minister to God and each other within the limitations of the revealed oracles. God will judge "without respect of persons according to every man's work" (1 Peter 1:17). Freed from the hampering restraints imposed by men, every soul may grow outward and upward toward perfection.

Man is a social being. He was not so constructed to live, grow or advance alone. Society is as essential to his development as food or atmosphere. Accordingly heaven has ordained a fellowship of kindred minds, and a communion of the saints. The congregation is the environment in which the soul receives renewed vigor. But the soul can never achieve its proper sphere merely by being acted upon by others. The minds and spirits composing the ekklesia of saints are not masses of passive material, fashioned to receive impressions unresistingly from abroad. They possess native forces which act upon impressions conveyed to them, and through rational processes discover new truths or new approaches to truth, and which they must be allowed to express, not only for the benefit of others, but for their own continued growth.

It was for this reason that in the primitive church, the Holy Spirit did not make one man the mouthpiece. There must be an intercourse of minds, a mutuality or exchange of thought. When the early disciples met in one place, all who were gifted with the power of edifying, exhorting and comforting were given the privilege of doing so, that all might learn and all be comforted (1 Cor. 14:31). Man was not made to shut his mind up in a cloistered cell, but to give it voice and to exchange it for other minds. Speech is one of our greatest distinctions from the brute. It is an instrument of soul culture. We understand ourselves better, our conceptions grow clearer to ourselves as we seek to make them clearer to others. Christianity provides freedom in the assembly for all men of faith and ability to share the fruits of their meditations, and thus to grow in grace and knowledge.

Any system which places the edification solely in the hands of one man, which makes it the exclusive task of a polished specialist, defeats the eternal purpose of God, minimizes the value and dignity of the individual soul, thwarts the personal growth and expansion so essential to preparation for heaven, places a dam across the stream of intellect, and usurps the freedom of those who are humble and helpless to resist. Such a

system which exalts talent and external polish above virtue and piety is a curse to the congregation and a despotic tyrant over thought. The one man ministry system is the greatest barrier the devil has erected in this century against the unbridled circulation of that truth which “makes men free.”

2. It Opposes the True Basis of Ministry

While our Lord was upon earth there seemed to be a constant misunderstanding upon the part of the disciples as to the nature of the kingdom of heaven. Constantly misconstruing His language, or interpreting it in the light of their own plans and fancies, they assumed that the kingdom would be earthly in its out-workings, and one in which there would be gradations of rank and authority to be exercised arbitrarily. The disputes arising out of this false view were many, loud and long. They continued almost to the time of His decease. The mother of James and John personally approached Jesus entreating for favored spots for her sons in the forthcoming realm of heaven. The indignation of the other apostles provided an opportunity for a great lesson by our Lord as recorded in Matthew 20:20-28.

The apostles were reminded that the leaders of the Gentiles exercised dominion over them, while those who were great or powerful exercised authority over them. He declared it should not be thus among the disciples, but whosoever would be great must be their minister, and whosoever would be chief must be their servant. Our Lord closed his teaching with the poignant statement, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” This philosophy cuts directly across the thinking of the multitude of saints today. Hundreds and thousands exist merely to be ministered unto religiously. They pay for such ministration as they buy life and accident insurance, and they expect its benefits.

It is not uncommon for people in the congregation to express disapproval of their hireling because he did not visit them while they were ill at home or in the hospital. They do not criticize the rest of the congregation for such neglect, for showing mercy today is the professional task of a hired hand. If a person is reported as ill, the minister is notified and expected to go see and pray for the sick one. It never occurs to most people that this is the responsibility of every Christian.

Does someone move into the community who might be led to attend services ? The minister is given the address and makes a professional call. After all it is his church, those who attend are his people, the speaker's platform is his pulpit. He is introduced as "our minister" and "his sermons" are advertised as the chief drawing card to the worship service. He maintains a file of the membership, he checks on the non-attendants, he goes out and rounds up the strays, he binds up the broken-hearted. In short, he is the service representative of the congregation, the spiritual trouble-shooter, the general manager.

But the essence of Christianity is service to others, and not service rendered for pay or for the wages of a hireling, but service rendered for the love of God and because of the divine philanthropy which is a natural result of it. Does the congregation require edification? Then every disciple should work effectively to produce it (Eph. 4: 16). Are there some who need comfort? All should comfort each other with the word of God (1 Thess. 4: 18). Are there fatherless and widows who are afflicted? Every Christian should visit them (James 1:27). Are there outsiders to be convicted? They should be convicted of all (1 Cor. 14:25). Is a brother overtaken in a fault? All who are spiritual should seek to restore him (Gal. 6:1). Do some require exhortation and encouragement? This is a daily mutual task (Heb. 3: 13). Should an invitation be issued to come to Christ? "Let him that heareth say, Come" (Rev. 22: 17).

Christianity is a manifestation of the Christ-principle. Our

motto should be “Not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” God’s vineyard is not a place where men may sit in the shade and hire others to wait upon them. God’s soldiers are not “gold bricks” who lead pampered, sheltered lives, while a few captains do periodic fighting. God’s people are not to be helpless, immature spiritual infants relying upon someone to spoon-feed them with strained baby foods, but full-grown men and women who can stand upon their own feet. The hireling system operates upon the basis that the majority of the members deserve to be served, and should be served according to their ability to pay, or commensurate with what they can afford. It creates an impression that you may come to Christ, not to minister, but to be ministered unto. In this it denies the principles of our Lord, and debases His entire fabric designed for our spiritual existence.

3. It Reduces the Church to a Helpless Weakling

It is a common thing to hear boastful remarks by the clerical attachés, who point with pride to their huge cathedral-like structures, their immense congregations, their enormous sums of money their massive programs. These are looked upon as indicative of spiritual power and strength, which is considered to be a sign of righteousness in accomplishment. A little rational sense will show that fabulous wealth, great numbers of adherents, and gigantic material structures, do not denote spirituality, for then the righteousness of the Roman Catholics, Mohammedans, Greek Orthodox, and many others, would far excel ours. Moreover, it is questionable how many in such “churches of Christ” as indulge in such boasting are really converted to Christ, and what proportion are attracted by the big preachers, big displays and big buildings! Let the preacher be turned out into the field, and let the congregation do its own feeding, and see how many continue to come to “the trough.” Some men are converted to a system, not to our Lord Jesus

Christ!

The whole truth is that most congregations with the hireling system are so weakened and enfeebled they cannot stand alone. The talents of the multitude are so undeveloped, the sense of dependency upon a man so acute, that the church gets the “weak trembles” and gives every sign of nervous collapse if the minister threatens to leave them “holding the sack.” Size is no indication of strength. The largest man in the world had to be helped to stand and waddled helplessly when he tried to walk. Blubber is not muscle. Excess fat may actually kill a body.

For years the pagan Chinese bound the feet of their female babies soon after birth. It was fashionable to do this and the nation was thus composed of a great group of cripples, made such by a lack of proper exercise. It has now become the fad to bind and restrict the members of the body of God’s Son until it cannot stand alone, and congregations forty years old have not yet learned to take nourishment without someone imported for a price to dip the spoon in the Bible. One of the saddest mental ills I know is that of a young man, thirty years of age, possessed of a strong frame and excellent physique, but whose mind has never developed. His very size and weight make the problem of his care more difficult. Is it a fact that some congregations which are so large are so stunted in mental and spiritual growth?

The apostle condemned the Corinthian church as being “babes in Christ.” There is nothing wrong about being a baby at the proper time, but there is something wrong in remaining in that state. There is a difference in being a baby and “a big baby!” The church at Corinth was censured because it had to be on a milk diet instead of being able to take solid food. One wonders what the apostle would have said if Corinth not only was on a diet but had to have someone else prepare the formula and hold the bottle. It can safely be said of Corinth that even as babies they were not given a preacher to act as “wet nurse.”

The very trend of the one-man system is toward a state of dependency upon the part of the church— not dependence upon Christ, but upon man. The idea is set forth that the church cannot exist without this system. The powers and abilities of humble saints are deprecated or derided. The only hope is to import a man at a fixed fee. Thus the church becomes weaker all of the time. The one man system is not the source of spiritual strength. God, who in His wisdom and strength, made us and gave us life, has not destined the great majority of His children to wear out their daily lives in unremitting toil and unimproving drudgery to benefit the few who constitute the clergy with a life of ease. Surely He did not intend for most of His children to be spiritual dwarfs. In the physical body are no organs created to shrivel by disuse; how absurd to conclude that the powers of the soul should be locked up in a state of lethargy.

4. It Enslaves Free Men

One of the great paradoxes of God's plan is that every child of God is both a slave and a free man (1 Cor. 7:22). Our slavery is the effect of voluntary submission unto Him, our freedom is submitted unto us voluntarily by Christ. Having been made free we are acknowledged as "fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." As a slave no man has any rights. A slave is one who belongs to another for whom he is bound to live and labor, and whose instrument he must be. The will of the master must be his law, regardless of how counter it may run to the former thinking of the slave. Another owns him, and thus has a right to his time and labor, and to the fruit of his labor, and to state the very bounds of his life. In our relationship as slaves we have no rights, we cannot legislate, we cannot decide what we will do or not do.

But as adopted sons and as citizens in the great religio-social structure of the kingdom, we have certain natural and inalienable rights. Citizenship imposes certain responsibilities,

but it also confers certain rights. Those who make up the church are still individuals, but individuals who have been “washed, sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” Their souls have been purified in obeying the truth. Now every pure one who is a citizen possesses certain rights because he is created of God. These rights are conferred by God. They are gifts from Him and not from the church; they are not surrendered upon induction into the church, and must not be abrogated under the spurious plea that it is best for the common good. Citizenship without rights is the doctrine of tyrannical despots.

Our rights belong to us as moral beings. So soon as one becomes conscious of duty to God, a related consciousness is kindled which reasons that he has a right to perform that which duty demands, and that no man or coalition of men can restrain him from fulfilling that duty without committing a crime against him. The sense of duty toward God and our fellows is the sacred fountain of all rights. The same inward principle which affirms the one also asserts the other. And that principal is universal and reciprocal, A man cannot claim the right to exercise his talent and deny that right to his brother. It is plain that if one can arbitrarily be denied his rights as a citizen, all citizens by the same token may be denied such rights, provided that someone powerful and clever enough arises to lay claim to all of them.

At this juncture it is inevitable that we shall be challenged to show what rights accrue to every citizen of the kingdom of heaven, and to define them concretely and concisely. We may be forced to admit that the rights of each individual, like his duties, may not be susceptible of such clear definitions as will not be attacked by quibblers and sophists. It is extremely difficult to measure spiritual mountains by material yardsticks. And while whole books might be written on such a topic, it is essential to our cause that we present the matter in such small compass as to enunciate an underlying principle. For that reason we affirm that the whole matter of rights is briefly comprehended in this,

that every individual fundamentally has the right to exercise his powers for his own happiness, wellbeing and edification, and for that of others unto whom he is bound by the ties of brotherhood!

It is for this very thing we have been created, for this we have been designed and given life. We are obligated to improve ourselves, to seek perfection, and to encourage and help all others to do the same. The ability to do this, in whatever degree it is bestowed, is a sacred trust from God. Perhaps it is the most outstanding of all trusts, for God will hold us accountable for that ability, as to whether we have used it, squandered it, allowed it to be dormant, to be hidden in a napkin, or stolen from us, even by brethren. All gifts for edification in every age of the congregation have been bestowed upon each “for the common good” (1 Cor. 12: 7).

Consequently, he suffers a grave injury who is stripped of this right bestowed by a beneficent Creator. It little matters whether the right is abrogated by force or threat, or whether it is captured by stealth or false teaching. A citizen may as effectively be robbed of his exercise of the right of franchise if taught by those in authority that he has no such right, as by a group of thugs who waylay and beat him up en route to the ballot box. The substitution of a system which effectively forbids the exercise of the right to speak “for the common good,” which takes the rights of all and confers them upon one man or a small clique, is upon the same basis in the church as a small group of politicians marking all of the ballots and dropping them in at the polls. As every man is bound by his relationship to God, and under God’s law, to utilize all of his powers and abilities for the common good, there is a corresponding obligation on the part of each to leave others free for the accomplishment of this end. And whoever exercises his own rights as a free citizen without abridging the same rights belonging equally to others deserves to be unassailed and unimpeded. But anyone who arrogates to himself the rights belonging to all, or who insists upon the exercise of his rights to the interference or cancellation of the

rights of others, must be exposed as a usurper of the prerogatives of God's humble servants.

Nothing is clearer from the sacred teachings of the New Covenant than that one of the solemn obligations of citizenship in God's kingdom is to exercise all gifts and abilities for the purpose of growing in grace and knowledge personally, and to edify and build up others, Heaven confers a definite responsibility to edify, and not merely to be edified. The responsibility or duty to do a thing must include the right to do it. When Paul instructed the brethren at Corinth "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Cor. 14: 12) the obligation to do it implied the right to do it. How absurd and ridiculous it would have been for the apostle to urge all to seek to excel in this grace, and then create a system making it impossible for them to exercise themselves in it at all.

This is the crux of the opposition to the one-man ministry system. Here is the place where it runs head on into God's system, and here it must be thrown back and repulsed or truth will suffer defeat. God's church is God's clergy, God's clergy is God's laity, and vice versa. Any system which arrogates into the hands of the few the rights of the many obstructs the purpose of God on earth and postpones the day of complete restoration. What scripture provides for the edification of the assembly to become the peculiar service of a special caste among God's regal priests? Was not the freedom of the speaker's platform an established principle in the primitive church? Was that freedom annulled by the cessation of spiritual gifts? Was "the more excellent way" one of enslavement of God's citizenry by a special caste?

We contend that the system of one-man hireling ministry current among the congregations of the saints acts as a subordinating and subjugating force and renders the free-born sons of God mere paying puppets to a preacher class. That system must be dispensed with, or the church can never

**recapture her former glory and power. Unless it is jerked out by
the roots and the roots themselves killed we are doomed. —2360
Gardner Dr., St. Louis**

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Restoration Review

by W. Carl Ketcherside

Journals

The following essays by Carl Ketcherside were originally published in *Restoration Review*, edited by Leroy Garrett, Denton, Texas, from 1959 through 1989.

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Goals of Restoration

Restoration Review 1 (Winter 1959): 15

Restoration Review

There are two subjects which should engross the attention of those who love the Lord in these days. One is the achievement of the unity of all believers in Him, the other is the restoration of the primitive order as set forth in the scriptures of the new covenant. It is my conviction that the first, for which our Saviour prayed, can only be accomplished through the second, for which we should labor. Unfortunately, we are hindered by the egotism of many, and by the indifference of many others. Those who think they have perfectly recovered all the Saviour gave, and perfectly uncovered all God's word holds for us, resent the very implication of the term "restoration." Those who reject the revelation of heaven as a guide, do not care to investigate it with a view to removing the rubbish and debris which have gathered through the years about the religion of the Christ.

We can be grateful there are still thousands who "sigh and cry for Jerusalem" and who are dedicated to the task of learning the way of truth more perfectly, and of sharing it with others. It is to these we dedicate this essay in which we propose to point out some of the areas wherein we should strive to recapture lost truths. As the Lord said to the aged Joshua, "There remains yet very much land to be possessed," so it is with us. In our brief notice of the following items, we may lay a foundation for further examination in subsequent issues of this periodical.

I. SCRIPTURAL VOCABULARY

We suggest the following points as a basis for our approach to this topic:

1. It is impossible for man to grasp the thoughts of God until he reveals them (1 Cor. 2:10, 11).

2. Any revelation of the thoughts of God to man, must be given through a means of communication known to and employed by man.

3. Since men employ words as symbols of ideas, to be intelligible to man, a revelation of God must be conveyed in human language.

4. The language employed in such revelation must be one commonly in *use* among the people, at the time and in the place, when such revelation is given.

5. Those who live in an age and time remote from that in which the revelation was given, and who employ another language, can only understand the revelation of heaven by ascertaining the usage of the terms in which it is couched by those to whom it was originally given.

6. The translation and interpretation of such terms must be according to the laws governing the translation and interpretation of other documents current among the same people, and at the same time, when the revelation was given.

7. Recognizing that words alter their significance through use by successive generations, the true restorationist must divest his mind as much as possible of prejudice created by ecclesiastical usage, and avoid reading into God's word those meanings which are hallowed by tradition, rather than by heaven.

A restoration of the primitive order cannot be accomplished without first restoring the vocabulary of the Spirit. The revelation of the Spirit can be understood only in the language of the Spirit. “We impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit” (1 Cor. 2:13). The language of human philosophy is not adapted to the interpretation of spiritual truths. Each profession has a jargon of its own. Such specialized verbiage is used to debar the uninitiated from sharing the knowledge of the elite corps. A “layman” cannot read a physician’s prescription, interpret a legal document, nor unravel a scientific or technological report. Neither can one such understand philosophical or clerical phraseology. But the possession of the Spirit is not limited to those who have ascended scholastic heights, therefore, interpretation of spiritual truths to such should be imparted in words taught by the Spirit, rather than dictated by human wisdom.

I shall expect to show sometime in the future, God willing, what is involved in this process. Suffice it to point out now that one of our chief tasks is to recover the true meaning of the terms used by the Spirit. To do this, we must recognize that there are two great alterations which can be wrought in language and which will militate against a restoration of primitive purity, unless identified and eliminated. One of these is the assignment of a limited meaning to an unlimited term; the other is just the reverse. When an inclusive term is applied in an exclusive sense, or an exclusive term is applied in an inclusive sense; confusion will be inevitable. The ultimate result will be that we will work at cross purposes with God, regardless of our sincerity.

The great apostasy, now manifest in the Roman hierarchy, was given birth when the term “bishop” began to be applied to one man as opposed to the other presbyters. Thus was the seed sown and its fruition came in the form of a pontifical prelate exercising control in an authoritarian politico-religio institution

of world dimensions. A term inclusive of all the overseers of a local flock was transferred to one as an exclusive right, and the damage was done. There is hardly a word of significance used by the Spirit which has not been abused and misapplied by men. Many of these words no longer convey the original intent of God to those who employ them. Of the many which I think of, I will mention but three, which will serve as examples.

1. *Gospel*. This word is currently applied to the entire content of the scriptures of the new covenant. No distinction is made between the tidings proclaimed to the world to enroll students in the school of Jesus, and the course of study provided for their development and growth—the doctrine. This confusion is the basis for one of the most tragic errors among those who constitute “The Church of Christ,” and tends to make of that body a restricted sect, instead of a fellowship of all sincere immersed believers.

2. *Minister*. Nothing is clearer than the fact that in the primitive church of God, this term simply designated a servant, but never expressed in itself the kind of service rendered. (For a full discussion of this point, read the author’s book, *The Royal Priesthood*). One “entered the ministry” by becoming a Christian. The employment of this word in an exclusive sense to designate one kind or branch of service, is an abuse of the language of the Spirit. It results in the creation of a professional, clerical caste, and by the same token, relegates others of God’s servants (ministers) to an inferior, or *lay position*.

It is difficult for those who profess interest in restoration to purge their speech of “the language of Ashdod.” I cite one example to illustrate the fact. My good friend and brother, Don DeWalt, recently published a book, *The Church in the Bible*. It contains a manual of instruction for those who wish to win souls. On page 192, occurs this statement relative to personal visitation of a member of the Methodist church: “You have never met him before, but when you tell him of your mission, i.e. that you are a

minister of the Church of Christ calling or visiting in the homes of the community (if you are not a minister, you could say you are a Christian worker from the Church of Christ with the same purpose as above stated).”

We do not question the earnest desire of this brother to portray the church in the Bible, but he will never do it by such statements as these. In the first place one reads in vain, trying to locate the “Church of Christ” in the Bible. The word “church” is not capitalized in God’s book as it is by our brother in his book. The term “church of Christ” does not appear in the Authorized Version. The expression “churches of Christ” occurs once in Romans 16:16. It is not used as *the* title of *a* church; it is merely *one* designation of *the* church. The apostle Paul would have been astounded to hear one say he was not a minister, but a Christian worker from the church. What is a minister, if not a Christian worker? What is a Christian worker, if not a minister? When one differentiates between “a minister of the church” and “a Christian worker from the church,” he reveals that his thinking is tainted with clericalism. Instead of restoring the church in the Bible, he will only confuse the minds of the believers. Every Christian is a minister, and if one is not, he has little business trying to convert Mr. Green, of the Methodist church, as the example of our brother postulates. He needs to be converted!

3. *Communion*. This word is ordinarily applied exclusively to the Lord’s Supper. Many refer to that feast as *the communion*. But it is a translation of *koinonia*, the same word also translated “fellowship.” In Acts 2:42, it is actually distinguished from the breaking of bread. Everything we do jointly is a part of our communion. The songs, the prayers, the sharing of our goods, all of these are a part of the communion of the saints. When brethren congregate to pray and study on Wednesday evening, that is as much “a communion service” as when they gather about the Lord’s table on the first day of the week. It is true the Lord’s Supper is a demonstration of the communion of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:16), but this is just one facet of

the communion of the saints.

II. PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

The reformers, protesting against the domination of a mercenary and rapacious clergy, became imbued with the idea that God's plan for this dispensation revolved around the idea that every child of God is a priest to "declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." They recaptured the theory of a universal priesthood, but were unable to restore the practice. Accordingly, the various sects, proceeding from their labors, soon developed a clerical caste, and by the very act, conferred upon a few the priestly prerogatives of the many. The restorationists, whose research influenced Alexander Campbell and his contemporaries, sought to restore to all of the believers, their priestly functions. As a close student of these men, Campbell seems to have caught a vision of God's purpose. Unfortunately, in his fears lest the gains of restoration be lost, he decided to develop a school in which men could be given specialized training for preservation of the faith. As always happens, this seminary produced trained professionals, and these became the clergy of the new movement. It is impossible to send men from the various congregations of the saints to take courses "in the ministry" and not develop a special clergy.

To conceal the fact that we have a special clerical group, a subterfuge is frequently employed. The clerics are dubbed "evangelists" or merely "preachers." The careful student of God's word knows they are neither. Actually, we have lost ground in this particular, and motivated by partisan pride, desire for recognition, and unreasoning fear, most of those who claim to be interested in restoration of the primitive order, have brain washed themselves into believing that the "one man hireling ministry" is a reproduction of the work of Paul, Timothy and Titus. They are interested only in defending the

status quo. They are convinced that God's plan for edification will not work in the United States in this century, as it did in Palestine in the first century of the Christian era, and for that reason, they do not propose to try it.

But, how shall we eliminate the clergy? That is not our task. Rather, it is to eliminate the laity. The word "clergy" means "lot, or portion." It refers to those who are the Lord's lot, or portion, out of the nations of the earth. Thus, every child of God is a member of the clergy, or a priest of God. If every Christian can be convinced that he is a clergyman, he will cease trying to hire another for his clergyman. Seldom do clergymen hire another clergyman to preach to them. Will this system work? Look at the cult who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses." Every member of this strange fringe group believes he is a minister. He devotes hours of his time to personal and contact work, and to teaching prospects. Will the plan of God work in the twentieth century in dissemination of error and be helpless in the propagation of truth? The principle of mutual ministry imbued the primitive congregations with a zeal that swept the world before it. It is the only spirit which can again duplicate that feat.

III. PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

It is a common statement in these days that Jesus gave "the great commission" to the church, and it is the duty of the church to proclaim the gospel to the lost. This is an indication of loose reasoning based upon our modern tendency to do everything organizationally, or leave it undone. Both parts of the above statement are without scriptural warrant. The so-called "great commission" was not given to the church at all.

1. It was given before the church was planted, and the planting of the church was the result of the implementation of the commission, not the result of it.

2. It was given to a group of individuals, and they were the very same individuals who had previously been given another commission, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not” (Matt. 10:5) . You could just as well argue that this commission was to the church, for it was to the same persons as the other.

In some circles at present there is a warfare of no mean proportion being waged over missionary societies or auxiliary bodies for proclaiming the gospel. It might be well to pause and reflect that God did not authorize, organize, or create any society, human or divine, to proclaim the gospel— *not even the church!* The gospel was not preached because the church was planted; the church was planted because the gospel was preached. The gospel was first proclaimed, men heard it, believed it, and responded to it in harmony with its demands. Those who did so then constituted the church. But men heard as individuals, believed as individuals, obeyed as individuals, were saved as individuals. They will also die as individuals, and be judged as individuals. The church is merely a congregation of holy ones, constituting the body of the Christ.

If it is the duty of the church to go into all the world, how will the church accomplish the task? The entire church will have to go, or that portion which does not go, will not do its duty. You cannot fulfill the command to “Go” by *sending* someone else. The command is to go. God made no provision for it to be carried out by substitution or proxy. Those to whom the commission was originally given, understood this, because the record immediately says, “And they went forth, and preached everywhere” (Mark 16:20). But if the commission is to the church as such, how will it be carried out? Is it to the whole church, or to each congregation? If to each congregation, then must each congregation “go into all the world”? If not, how can each fulfill the commission? If it is given to the church universal, who will decide on areas of labor, mark the boundaries of each worker, and exercise diocesan control?

If it is the duty of the church *as an organization* to preach the gospel to *every* creature, it would be wrong for an individual to tell the good news to *any* creature, without license or permission to do so from the organization. An individual has no right to intrude upon the prerogatives of an organized society and carry out *its* functions without authorization. Individuals are not allowed to print money in the United States, even though the finished product is an exact duplicate of currency issued by the government.

The command is plain. It is “Go!” If there are 300 members in a congregation and they send one man to Africa, that one obeys the command. He goes. But the other 299 do something else— they stay! If we can obey one command by selecting a man and letting him do the duty of all, why can we not obey all the commands on that same basis? The whole truth is that “the great commission” was given to certain individuals. They carried it out exactly as they were told to do. It was not given to the church as such. The work of gospel proclamation is not the work of any organization as such— be *it* human or divine.

Then who is to announce the glad tidings? Every individual saint! Every person who has found the Messiah is to lead others to him. “Let him that heareth, say, Come!” That is our commission (Rev. 22:17). It is universal in scope. The church is not to send out a missionary. The church is made up of missionaries. Each member is a missionary. This obligation stems not from affiliation with a local church, but from allegiance to a universal king. Each person may find his speaker’s rostrum where he is. The kitchen table becomes a sacred desk to the mother who talks about Jesus to her children while she makes the pies, the plow handle upon which the farmer leans as he talks to his neighbor, the lathe of the machinist, the desk of the executive, the chair of the barber, all of these are sanctified to the Master’s use when utilized to win souls. It is no more an obligation of one saint to tell others of

Jesus than it is of another. Imagine a congregation of Christians calling another man to come across several states to tell their neighbors, or themselves, about the love of Jesus! Modern revivals in the churches are expedients devised to cover up the dearth of the Spirit in the hearts of the members. They are monuments of our own lack of conversion!

What is the mission of the church? It is one of edification. It is a fellowship in which each member derives strength from others, and contributes strength to them (Eph. 4:16). The church is a filling station, not a parking lot; a training ground, not a battlefield. It is a school for education and discipline. Nothing has so defeated the real purpose of God in our lives as when we began building meeting houses in which to preach the gospel to the world. It was then we ceased to go, and demanded that the sinner furnish the transportation to the gospel. In the primitive church the members gathered to worship, and scattered to preach. They congregated for strength and went forth to serve. The world will not be saved by mass effort on an organizational basis. The world can only be preserved by salt, and every grain is required, and every grain to be effective must come in direct contact with that which it is to influence. You may preserve the salt by keeping it in the shaker, but you cannot preserve the food.

The time spent in calling meetings to plan missionary work ought to be used in doing it. It is not talking about lost souls that will save them, but talking to them. Meetings are called to discuss taking the gospel to lost men; and end up in discussing what man we can call to do it. We have lost sight of the fact that all who have been called of God, are called by a purpose and for a purpose. If I call a man from Virginia to tell my neighbor in Missouri about Jesus, then I have not done my duty toward my neighbor. Missionaries frequently pass each other on the road, both of them going to a field in which the other lives, and both passing thousands of lost souls enroute! Meanwhile, people will travel hundreds of miles to hear a debate about "The Herald of

Truth” who have never tried to herald the truth to the folks across the street!

IV. CHURCH CONSTITUTION

The congregation at Philippi was composed of “all the saints in Christ Jesus, with the bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). They were the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. Among the heathen who surrounded them, they shone as lights in the world, and held forth the word of life. The word “saints” is essentially a term of character. It designates those who are the holy ones. All in Christ Jesus are *called* saints.

Over the congregation at Philippi were the bishops. This word is elsewhere rendered “overseers.” It applies to those who are the superintendents or supervisors of a congregation. They are also referred to as pastors, or shepherds, in which case the congregation is designated “a flock.” The bishops were selected from among the members of the local congregation. They were ordained to this office only when they met certain qualifications announced by the Spirit. They were capable men chosen to meet an important responsibility.

One of the concerns of those interested in restoration should be the return of the office of bishop to its proper status in the congregation. In many instances it is disregarded and even disrespected. This is the result of several factors. In some instances men have been appointed to the office merely to conform to a form of church government without regard to qualifications. Many of those appointed have proven to be of little intellectual and spiritual stature, and have brought the office into disrepute, holding back the progress of the church, and ruling arbitrarily without regard for the feelings of those who constitute the flock.

Again, much effort and time have been expended in

developing preachers, while little has been done to train for bishops. It is possible that if we had concentrated on the task of helping godly men fit themselves into the work of the presbytery, the cause of Christianity might be more advanced. It is the conviction of the writer that one of our greatest present needs is for capable leadership. Godly men who shepherd the flock should be encouraged, helped and strengthened. The dignity of the office should be reaffirmed and members taught to regard it with proper reverence.

Preachers of the gospel should avoid the assumption of the work and responsibility which belongs to the elders. In many places the bishops are mere figureheads. The preacher becomes the “front man” and the bishops bask only in his reflected glory. The preacher is the business manager and chief manipulator of congregational affairs. This is a far cry from the structure and procedure of the original congregations of Christians.

In conclusion, we must realize that the task before us is a great one. We must face up to our problems with honesty and courage. These problems, though great, are not insuperable. With faith in God and love for His word, we should pass forward without fear or prejudice. If we expend our lives in the battle for truth, the reward received will amply repay for even that sacrifice. May His grace be our shield and strength!

Ministry and Restoration

Restoration Review 2 (Spring 1959): 81

Restoration Review

The vitality and spiritual virility of the primitive community of saints stemmed from its implementation of the divinely ordained principle of mutual ministry. Each member of the community had been added to it as the result of his experience in establishing a personal covenant relationship with the Father, through his Son Jesus Christ. This experience involved a crucifixion of the old self (Rom. 6:5). The individual died, and his life was hid with Christ in God (Col 3:3). The result was expressed in this fashion, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

These saints did not regard their relationship as a way of life, but as *life itself*. They were not troubled about the philosophy of life which they should adopt, for they had been adopted, and were themselves the living embodiment of Him who was both the power and *the wisdom* of God. They were not so much philosophers, as they were a living philosophy— a philosophy demonstrated, manifest, and apparent to all who look upon them. Since they had died and now the Christ lived in them, they were in the world for the same reason he had come into it. That purpose was stated by Jesus in these words, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). Since this was the motive of Jesus in coming, and since he now dwells in the

saints, the life we now live must be one of ministration to others, and of giving even life itself. This must be the status of all who are in Him, not of a select few, a trained segment, or an elite corps!

We live in a decadent age of religion. The stream of Christian thought, in its onward flow through the centuries, has accumulated a great deal of sediment. The shape of the original concept has been greatly altered by the friction endured in its contact with the abrasives of human desires and determinations. The response of the thirsty soul to God is now made on the basis of “the plan of salvation,” illustrated by a kitchen stepladder arrangement on the blackboard, in which the individual steps off the lower rung of faith as quickly as he got on it, and is forced to take a third ritualistic step called “confession” which has been inserted by the simple expedient of wresting certain scriptures from their context. No longer do we come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, and enter into personal covenant relationship through faith in Jesus, validated by our submission to baptism, but we become members of an organization, instead of becoming partakers in a divine organism. The greatest surrender we are called upon to make, is not of the life to Jesus, but of our freedoms, prerogatives and rights to *a System*—inaugurated, perpetuated, and administered by men, but arrogantly demanding conformity in the name of Jesus.

The System, which has borrowed the livery of heaven, and appropriated and exalted as an official title a simple descriptive term employed by the Holy Spirit, seeks, as do all human arrangements, to immortalize itself by resistance to all criticism and revolution. To achieve this end, it holds over the heads of its members the threat of excommunication, ostracism and boycott. And, as is characteristic of all such organizations functioning as usurpers in the spiritual realm, it has a vocabulary of its own, calculated to deceive the uninitiated and unwary, by employment of innocent terms which are equated in harmony with the partisan position.

“The truth” becomes the arbitrary interpretation placed upon the sacred scriptures; “preaching the gospel” is equivalent to parroting the party line, often from traditional outlines collected and classified in books; “Bible baptism” is immersion administered by a preacher (clergyman) in good standing with the party; “restoration” is defending the present status of the party by bending scriptures to justify what is done; and “entering the ministry” is not enlisting in the service of Christ, but going away to a theological school maintained by *The System* to prepare a clergy who will conform to party programs and become part of a pressure group to stifle original thinking and quell revolt against legalism.

In no other field is the divergence of *The System* from the practice of the primitive community of saints, more clearly apparent, than in the concept of ministry. Current expressions such as “hiring a minister,” “firing a minister,” “graduate minister,” “assistant minister,” “retirement from the ministry,” etc., were not only no part of the vocabulary of the Holy Spirit, but the connotation of the terms was wholly foreign to the community of God. Thoughtless, superficial students of the new covenant scriptures frequently urge that “mutual ministry” is not found in the sacred writings. It is important that we examine this claim without hesitancy or quibbling.

1. IS “MUTUAL MINISTRY” SCRIPTURAL?

The King James translators render the words of Paul in Romans 1:12, “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established, that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.” The RSV has it, “That we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine.” This is important because it shows that the word “mutual” denotes a reciprocal action. It is not “one toward others,” but it is “each toward the other.” The same word that is translated “mutual” in

this place is 76 times rendered “one another.” The lexicons define the original with the terms, “one another, reciprocally, mutually.”

In 1 Peter 4:10 we read, “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” This passage regulates the use of gifts which may be employed for the welfare of the community. The instruction is to every man. It embraces the proper utilization of every gift. God bestows no useless gifts. His grace is many-sided. It is reflected in diverse ways and means. But those who are recipients and possessors of gifts are stewards, and as such must render an account to the Master. To be good stewards, those entrusted with a gift, must minister the same one to another, that is, mutually. Here is “mutual ministry” and it is authorized by the God of heaven.

Those who oppose this clear instruction and are exponents and defenders of *The System*, which purports to be the church of God, seek by devious forms of argument to offset the teaching of the Spirit. Many who glibly quote the succeeding verse, which is but an exposition of this one, deny the applicability of the passage under consideration, to our present state. They wave it lightly aside by making it appear that it belonged only to the miraculous age, and the gifts to be ministered mutually are no longer obtainable, so the regulation for employment of the gifts of the holy ones has been abrogated.

This shallow reasoning is the refuge of those who have “an axe to grind,” and who are more interested in keeping what they have, than in restoring what God has authorized. The word *charisma* simply means “a favor which one receives without any merit of his own.” It may be either a natural or supernatural gift. In either case it is from God, for “every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights.” The word is applied to the natural gift of continence, which enabled Paul to be free from the compulsion of sexual

desire, and thus to remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:7). He calls it a gift from God.

Supernatural gifts belong to the supernatural age of the community of the Christ, natural gifts belong to a natural age of administration. But the regulation for employment of the gifts of God does not change, and all such are to be ministered mutually, according to the ability bestowed by God. To attempt to deprive many gifted ones in the community from exercise of their abilities, and set up a system which would make such exercise impossible, and to do so on the basis that God removed the right to use gifts he now bestows, when he changed the method of bestowal, is to tamper with divine prerogatives in a manner which should make those shudder who are guilty of doing so. Certainly, if when men were directly endowed by the Spirit, all were to minister, it would be presumptuous to assert that since none are directly endowed, one may assume to do it all.

2. SCOPE OF MUTUAL MINISTRY

What was to be done mutually, or reciprocally, in the primitive community of the saints? In his wonderful thesis on the unified functioning of the divine organism, the apostle Paul points out that there are varieties of gifts, service, and working, although proceeding from the one source. The purpose of the gifts is thus described, "To each is given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor. 12:7). Here are a few of the mutual aspects pertaining to "the common good."

1. *Love*. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God" (1 John 4:9).

2. *Hospitality*. "Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (1 Pet. 4:9).

3. *Forbearance*. "With longsuffering, forbearing one

another in love” (Eph. 4:2).

4. *Forgiveness*. “Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, for giving one another” (Eph. 4:32)

5. *Comfort*. “Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:18) .

6. *Edification*. “Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19).

7. *Exhortation*. “Exhort one another daily” (Heb. 3:13).

8. *Teaching and Admonition*. “Teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16) .

9. *Care*. “The members should have the same care one for another” (1 Cor. 12:25).

10. *Confession of faults*. “Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another” (James 5:16) .

11. *Service*. “By love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

12. *Burden bearing*. “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ” (Gal. 6:2)

Although, a community when newly planted, would be nurtured and nourished by the evangelist who begot them by the gospel, such a one, like a father, would train the new converts in every phase of service. He would seek to make them capable of doing without his presence, so he could be on with his primary task of taking the Good News to those who had not previously heard it. Every member would be given full opportunity to exercise and develop his ability, and the evangelist would work himself out, rather than work himself in. The goal of the infant

community was to reach maturity, to stand upon its own feet, to further the cause without help. They had been called to minister, not to be ministered unto.

When men among their own number had attained the qualifications required of bishops, or pastors, these were selected by the community, ordained by the evangelist, and under their oversight, the community functioned as an independent unit. The evangelist was no longer required. His work with the congregation had been finished. To suggest that such a community “hire a minister” to conduct their corporate devotions, carry on instruction in exhortation and admonition, visit their sick, and administer their communal affairs, would have been an insult, a reflection against their growth in grace and knowledge, and an implication that they were still in a state of infantile weakness and incompetency. The measure of growth in one congregation of saints, is found in the words of the apostle Paul, addressed to them, “I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

Mutual ministry applies to every phase of life and activity in the community of the holy ones. It utilizes for the common good every gift, talent, or ability, within the regulation of the apostolic doctrine. It is not limited to the public corporate worship of the community, nor does it exclude it. It does not make a majority of the saints a mere paying membership whose chief function is to provide a stipend for one to minister unto them, but it recognizes that all are ministers without exception, and the term “ministry” is an inclusive one which describes every act and function by which God and man are served.

3. RELATION TO RESTORATION

Every honest researchist in the history of the ancient community of God, is forced to admit that mutual ministry was

the very basis of communal life, and the reason for the rapid spread and conquests of Christianity. Why, then, those who claim to be laboring for restoration of the primitive order, show such disinterest in, and often manifest such open hostility to, the recapture of this concept? We cite a few factors which we consider pertinent to any attempt to answer.

1. *Unbelief.* There are those who freely admit that mutual ministry was the secret of the strength and growth of the primitive community. They acknowledge that “the saints, with the bishops and deacons,” constituted the local community, and the modern “located minister” was no more a part of the divine arrangement, than was an archbishop or pope. But they hasten to say that God’s plan will no longer work. In this age of complexity and perplexity, we must reverse the order of heaven and teach the disciples that they come “to be ministered unto, and not to minister.” The simple ministry ordained by God is not adapted to a gadget world of slot machines where you turn a knob to indicate what you want, then drop your money in to get it, so “the minister” must be selected by the trial sermon method. Thus, we are treated to the sordid spectacle of performers passing across the stage, exhibiting their wares, and turning on their charm, like bathing beauties in a contest, hoping for the nod from the judges on the sidelines, hearts beating with trepidation while the elders make their decision.

Those who begin with the premise that God’s way is outmoded and impossible, forfeit all right to be regarded as restorationists. They are actually enemies of restoration. They will oppose it with the bitterness and animosity of a wildcat defending the cub to which it gave birth. It is only those who feel a compulsion to adopt and implement the ideal of God, those who are not legislators or inventors of schemes and systems of their own, but who trust in God and labor under the earnest conviction that He who said His ways were not the ways of men, will no more allow His way to fail, than he will allow His word to return unto Him void, who may be truly called restoration-

mindful. This is the way of faith!

2. *Party spirit.* This work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20) is a motivating factor for much that is done in the religious realm. It is subtle and cunning, worming itself into the hearts of the believers, and beguiling even the strongest with a hundred innocent guises. It is apparent in every propaganda move which attempts to spur communicants to greater contributions and outlays on the basis of comparison or contrast with other factions or sects.

Promoters of *The System*, which has generally supplanted the movement for restoration of the primitive order in our generation, are especially adept at exploitation of the party spirit. They seek to wring shekels from the purses of the members to maintain their benevolent and eleemosynary institutions and societies by appeal to what the Roman Catholics are doing with their orphanages; they stimulate interest in their television and radio programs, and solicit funds to be sent to the national headquarters for these communication media, by citing the per capita gifts of Seventh Day Adventists. They spur up flagging zeal in foreign missions by contrasting the paucity of their own efforts with those of the Baptist and Methodist organizations. The laggards are whipped into line through fear psychosis. "The Baptist will get 'em, if you don't watch out!"

All such incitements are fatal to the genius and spirit of the Christian faith. They place relationship to the Christ upon the basis of sectarian competition, and although we may by such devious and ill-contrived means build another sect, and a more successful one than others, we do a great disservice to our Lord and his cause by such undesirable motivations. The party spirit spawns factional pride. We dare not be outdone in popular appeal. We must erect edifices as great as those about us; we must at least match, and surpass if possible, the ritualistic performance of our rivals. This demands a "minister" to serve as our front man, one who is skilled in the art of public

presentation, a dramatic actor upon the speaker's platform, attired in the height of fashion, driving a car of the latest model, a good mixer, a social person who will bring honor to us. And some who ought to worship God are soon diverted to the worship of a man.

In such an atmosphere of haughtiness and vainglory, the modest unassuming ministry of the primitive community of holy ones, cannot thrive. Fashionable communicants who keep one eye on God and the other on their religious neighbors, to see how they are being impressed, may pay lip service to the apostles, but would not permit one of those fishermen to "occupy the pulpit." The blackened, needle-pricked fingers of a tent-maker would hardly adorn one of our cathedrals. So the humble ones are relegated to a menial position where their voices can never be raised in the assembly to edify or exhort one another. The right to speak now belongs only to a professional who performs the task for a fee.

4. WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

Those who are concerned about recapturing the spirit and essence of pure Christianity, cannot sit idly by and know that the ideal of God is still enshrouded by the mists of human philosophy. They must be impelled by an overwhelming urge to dispel the clouds and unveil the beauty of the divine arrangement. But what can be done to offset the influence of entrenched power, pelf, and prestige? Does anyone dare to face the storm of ridicule, venom and hate which will be unleashed against him? Can he endure misrepresentation, malignant whispering and malicious attack? The Roman hierarchy, confusing itself with "the Church" has rendered itself impervious to attack by the parishioners, who have been taught that opposition to the priestcraft, regardless of venality, is a betrayal of the Christ. In the same fashion, *The System*, which equates itself with the New Testament church, seeks to make it

appear that those who criticize it are enemies of truth, and in conflict with our Lord.

The problem we face is a major one. It is intensified by the fact that mutual ministry runs counter to the laziness, indifference and sloth, which characterize many who would rather pay a man to serve God in their stead. It is unappealing to the pride of a professional caste whose craft will be endangered. There is no easy solution by which we can slough off the dross and restore the original ideal. We do humbly suggest a few points for consideration.

1. The sincere preachers of the Good News, who have been unwitting victims of *The System*, should recognize that the position which they hold as “the minister” of a congregation is without warrant or sanction in the sacred scriptures. It is but a humanly devised pastor system under disguise. They should retain a vision of their real mission, which is not to remain a nursemaid for deliberately retarded, puling spiritual infants, who refuse to learn to feed themselves, but to take the Good News to those not yet in the fold.

2. Those who are bishops, and thus, are God’s pastors, should confess their failings and shortcomings in the past, and begin at once to act in conformity with the dignity and seriousness which becomes this sacred function. They should go among the sheep, gently leading, teaching, feeding, and be ever on the alert for those gifts which have been latent and dormant, but which can be called into use.

3. The saints who read these words should gird themselves for renewed effort and responsibility. Every one of you is a minister. Everyone is a priest of God. Begin to serve and to sacrifice. Each one should study, seek and search, and be ever watchful for the means by which he can strengthen and encourage his fellows. “Follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” Be

longsuffering, forbearing and patient with those who do their best, yet whose efforts are feeble. We must learn to crawl before we can walk!

4. All of us should come to know the depth of responsibility which is attached to a state of covenant relationship with The Eternal One. As ancient Israel heard the words of God thundered from the darkened brow of Sinai, and said, “All that the Lord has commanded us will we do,” so let us at the foot of the mount which cannot be touched, affirm our intention to be faithful to the covenant which is sanctified by the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Drifting and Dreaming

Restoration Review 3 (Summer 1959): 171

Restoration Review

It was Sunday evening and the fashionably attired members were filing into the large brick church edifice. The men halted upon the top step and took a last long draw upon their cigarettes before flipping them into the yard. Ushers in faultless dress led them down soft carpeted aisles to the deeply cushioned pews. The jingle of gold bracelets was heard as painted women put dainty hands to well-arranged coiffures. Everyone was relaxed in the air-conditioned comfort. It was a momentous occasion because the new minister was to speak on “Restoring the New Testament Church.” A special invitation had been given through a costly advertisement in the Saturday paper, for all members of sectarian churches to attend. Some of these had accepted and were already present.

The minister left his air-conditioned study in the six room parsonage adjoining the church building. He paused in front of the hall mirror to give his tie a final pat, and to arrange the flower on his coat lapel. In front of the church building, he paused again to admire the large lighted sign: “CHURCH OF CHRIST— James A. McKendree, Minister.” It was a distinct honor to be the minister of such a congregation. He recalled the statement of his instructor at the theological seminary in Nashville when he was a preacher student. “You men can write your own paychecks. You can get fifty, eighty or a hundred dollars per week. It just depends upon what will satisfy you. We

want the graduates of this institution to demand and receive what they are worth, so it will not reflect against the school” The minister smiled. His check read much more than the maximum mentioned each week. Now if he could just convince some of the prominent Baptists and Methodists that this was the New Testament church, his reputation would be made.

During his sermon he was irked by the lack of attention by his own members. One of the elders slept off the effects of a heavy afternoon meal. Two of the women who taught classes on Sunday morning whispered to each other during the service. But the people he sought to impress— the sectarians— gave good attention. He belabored human creeds, sprinkling for baptism and instrumental music in the worship. He pointed out that none of these were characteristic of the New Testament church, and we must eliminate them if we would restore the church our Lord died to purchase. He was eminently satisfied with the sermon. He had delivered it before as a trial sermon at two other places, and in both cases it had won him the pulpit over other candidates.

After the sermon he took his place in the foyer, his wife by his side, and shook hands with the departing guests. He was thrilled when the Vice-president of the First National Bank, congratulated him, and informed him that he and his wife were thinking of affiliating themselves with the Church of Christ. He said, “Two of your elders are members of the Rotary Club, and while we were playing cards at my house the other night, they were kidding me, as they always do at our noon luncheons at the hotel on Wednesday. They told me that my sprinkling didn’t have enough water in it to wash away any very big sins, and I could see they had Bible for what they said.”

The preacher did not often dream. His slumber was generally undisturbed. But on this Sunday night, he had the church on his mind. Perhaps it was that, or it may have been the Swiss cheese on rye bread that he ate just before retiring. In any event, he had a strange experience in his sleep. He found himself

in a narrow cobble-stone street in a foreign city. He knew it was the Lord's Day, and he had never missed a gathering of the church. But how could he locate it? Strange though it seemed, he found himself able to understand the language of those on the street, and to speak it. He accosted a man who was richly dressed in native costume, "Sir, can you tell me where I can find the Church of Christ?" The man stared at him uncomprehendingly and shook his head in the negative. But a poorly clad individual with a slave owner's brand upon his forehead, waiting until the rich man passed on, stepped to his side, and whispered, "Perhaps, sir, you look for the community of the holy ones. Come with me!"

They walked a mile before turning down a darkened alley. The preacher shuddered. His feet were paining him from the exertion. In a narrow aperture between two buildings a flight of stairs led upward. The guide began to climb. Two full flights he went before he stopped in front of a rude door. He opened it and entered, beckoning for the preacher to follow. A company of men and women sat around a long table containing food. "It is the feast of love," said the guide, "come, be seated."

An aged man with long beard arose, and spoke, "Welcome brothers, to the feast of charity. We have been awaiting your arrival. As our beloved brother Paul has instructed so have we done. When we came together to eat, we tarried one for another. Now let us thank God for his rich mercy." Food was passed to the guest, strange food but well-prepared. Those who appeared to be possessed of some means served the poor, the slaves, and the ill-clad. Each appeared to esteem others better than himself. Inquiries were made as to the welfare of those not present.

At the close of the meal, the aged man who had extended the welcome at the beginning, now took his place at the head of the table. Before him rested a loaf of bread and a cup of liquid. The aged one spoke, "Dearly beloved, let us engage in praise to God and edification of one another." A man arose and began a

hymn of praise. It was different than anything the visitor had ever heard. It was more like a chant than a song. At its conclusion, a man arose who identified himself as a shoe cobbler. His fingers were blackened with the prick of the awl. But he lifted his stained hands in a gesture which seemed gentle and kind, as if in benediction. He spoke feelingly of the need for personal consecration and for separation from the world. He told of his own surrender to the Christ, and how the Spirit had fashioned his life into one of utility and service even as he took scraps of leather and made from them the sandals which brought comfort to the feet of those who journeyed along the roads.

When he sat down, the slave who had guided the preacher arose, and declared the preceding remarks had stirred him to give personal testimony to his own faith. He belonged to an unbelieving master. He was often beaten. His body bore the marks of the lash. He had secured the right to attend the service by toiling all night, treading the waterwheel in the irrigation canal. But his spirit was free. He urged all who were free in body to use that freedom to free others from sin. The lash of the master could not make a mark upon the spirit. Some wept openly as he spoke.

He was followed by a fruit merchant from the bazaar, who relinquished his place to a weaver of cloth. Each shaped his words from the experience of his own life or trade. When no one else signified a desire to speak, the president, with a tone of sadness, said, "Brethren, beloved, you know that our dear Jason was apprehended in the week past for proclaiming the words of this life in the market-place. At his trial he was sentenced to banishment. He is now in custody awaiting a ship sailing from our shores. He will need our prayers and our assistance. Let those whose hearts are moved to have fellowship in his suffering, give to his succor, and the servants of the community of holy ones will see that he receives your grace ere he sails." Everyone except the preacher arose as if by common impulse and moved

toward the head of the table. Some placed money on the table in front of the president. One man, stripped off a beautiful cloak, and folding it, placed it on the table, saying, "He will need it more than do I, and may our dear Lord grant him abundant mercy." Another removed the sandals from his feet and placed them with the garment.

A solemn hush fell over the assembly. The bearded patriarch took the loaf in his hand. He gazed upon it and the tears welled to his eyes and trickled down his cheeks. He spoke of suffering, of cruel death on a tree, of hope springing anew from an open tomb. Lifting his eyes toward heaven he gave thanks. Every man and woman present at the table said, "Amen!" The bread was passed to all. Next the cup was given to them, and tears coursed down the cheeks of rich and poor, master and slave, alike. Afterwards all of them kneeled. One after another they prayed fervently. The slave, kneeling beside the preacher, prayed, "Dear Master, bless our brother who has come to us from afar to be our guest this day"— and just at this juncture the preacher awakened.

The next morning, as his wife set the ham and eggs before him for breakfast, he said to her, "I had the craziest dream last night. I thought I was in some foreign country, but I couldn't tell where. I stopped a man on the street and asked the location of the church. Some fellow who looked like a tramp took me upstairs in a building that had no sign on it, so I couldn't tell what it was. We went into a room where some crackpot group was holding some kind of religious service. I don't know what they belonged to, but they were fanatics. They cried a lot, even while one of their number was trying to sing a solo. It was the funniest place you ever saw— no pulpit, no minister, no sermon, no song leader, and no order to their service. Anyone who wanted to could get up and talk, even shoe cobblers and servants. I wonder what on earth makes a person have such fantastic dreams?"

“Did they use instrumental music?” asked his wife, smilingly.

“No, they didn’t have that,” he replied.

“Well, they were right on one thing at least,” she said.

“Yeah, but that’s about the only thing,” said the preacher. “If you’ll excuse me, I believe I’ll go up and polish up another talk on restoration. I think we’ve got some of the sectarians in this town eating out of our hand.”

Gospel and Doctrine

Restoration Review 4 (Fall 1959): 221

Restoration Review

Restoration movements, like the people who launch them, grow old and slow down. They become sedentary and stationary. With the cessation of movement comes stagnation. When the search for the ancient order halts, sectarianism takes over. In such an event not only is an embargo placed upon truth, but truths once discovered are again lost, and vital ground is surrendered. A careful study of the various factions resulting from the restoration movement sparked by Thomas and Alexander Campbell will demonstrate the truth of what we say.

In the *Gospel Guardian*, March 13, 1958, appears an editorial entitled “What Must Men Believe To Be Saved?” It is a good example of the point we are making. The editor emphasizes the fact that Jesus said, “He that believeth not shall be damned.” He then says, “Since I do not want to be condemned I am most anxious to determine exactly what it is that Jesus requires that I believe.”

He cites as an answer Mark 16:15, 16: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” The conclusion is reached thus: “The gospel is what Jesus commanded his apostles to preach, and it is what men are required to believe. Can anyone doubt this obvious truth?”

The editor continues, “In view of the confusion in the religious world, let us see if we can find a standard by which the test may be made to see what the gospel is and who is preaching it. Some pointed questions dealing with the heart of the matter should help us to learn what is the truth about this.”

In characteristic factional form the following questions are proposed. “Does a man claim to be preaching the gospel when he is preaching Baptist doctrine? If he is, then the Lord says: ‘He that believeth not shall be damned.’ Everyone, therefore, would have to believe Baptist doctrine to be saved. Are the peculiar and distinctive doctrines and practices of the Baptist church a part of the gospel?” The answer given by such a querist is obvious, and he systematizes his reasoning as follows: “(1) A man cannot be saved who does not believe the gospel of Christ. (2) But one can be saved without believing Baptist doctrine. (3) Therefore, Baptist doctrine is not the gospel of Christ, and must be a perverted gospel. What else can one make of it?”

The writer affirms, “The same standard may be used to test the peculiar teaching of any religious group. It proves the same thing regarding the doctrine of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Nazarene, Lutheran, and other denominations.” We presume the editor will admit that “The Church of Christ” is a religious group, and since the same standard may be used to test the peculiar teaching of *any religious group*, it will be a good measuring reed in this instance as well. I hold no brief for the “peculiar teaching of the Methodist, Presbyterian, Nazarene, and Lutheran” religious groups. The same thing holds true for the peculiar teaching of “The Church of Christ” religious group — or groups, for there are a great many of them. It is true that the peculiar teaching of none of these is “the gospel” which the chosen envoys were to proclaim, for the simple reason that *no body of doctrine* constituted that gospel.

In his partisan presentation, our editorial brother unwittingly reveals his own ignorance and the wisdom of his

Baptist opponents. And while his thesis may be applauded as profound by members of “The Church of Christ” denomination, it is based upon a fallacy of which no early restorationist would have been guilty. Certainly a man is not “preaching the gospel when he is preaching Baptist doctrine.” Neither is he preaching the gospel when he is preaching “Church of Christ doctrine.” He is not even doing so when he instructs men in the apostles’ doctrine. The gospel of Christ is one thing; the apostles’ doctrine is a wholly different thing. They are distinct messages, not even intended for the same classes of people.

Before students may be taught in a school they must be enrolled or enlisted, but enrollment is one thing, and instruction is another. Jesus commissioned his envoys to “Go, and enroll disciples from all nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I command you” (Matt. 28:19). The method to be used in enrollment is stated in Mark 16:15, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” The gospel was to be preached to those who had not been immersed, with a view to lead them to that act of enrollment based on faith, and those enrolled by the gospel were then to be given a regular course of instruction. They were not to be taught the gospel, for one does not teach or instruct *news*. They were to be taught the apostles’ *doctrine*.

Preaching was an altogether different thing than teaching. Alexander Campbell was aware of this distinction. He regarded it as an unhappy thing for both the world and the church that the distinction was lost, or glossed over. Ponder carefully upon these words:

Preaching the gospel and teaching the converts are as distinct and distinguishable employments as enlisting an army and training it, or as creating a school and teaching it. Unhappily, for the church and the world, this

distinction, if at all conceded as legitimate, is obliterated or annulled in almost all protestant Christendom. The public heralds of Christianity, acting as missionaries or evangelists, and the elders or pastors of Christian churches are indiscriminately denominated preachers or ministers; and whether addressing the church or the world, they are alike preaching or ministering some things they call Gospel They seem to have never learned the difference between preaching and teaching.

Campbell insisted that an understanding of this distinction was an absolute essential to any evangelist who was laboring for true restoration. Here are his expressions on the subject in *Popular Lectures and Addresses* (pages 536, 537):

The difference between *preaching* and *teaching* Christ, so palpable in the apostolic age, though now confounded in the theoretic theologies of our day, must be well defined and clearly distinguished in the mind, in the style and utterances of an evangelist or missionary who would be a workman that need not to blush, a workman covetous of the best gifts and of the richest rewards . . .

In the discharge of the duties of this work he must properly and fully understand the whole oracles of God, and clearly distinguish between *preaching* and *teaching* Jesus Christ. This is no mere speculative distinction. It was appreciated, fully understood, and acted upon, or carried out in the apostolic ministry

For the sake of accurate and intelligible language and a clear appreciation of the Christian Scriptures and the Lord's will concerning us, these words and works should be clearly understood and employed by every evangelist or missionary of the church sent out and patronized by the church; and more especially by our brotherhood, who unite in the apostolic platform of church union, communion, and co-operation.

Perhaps the clearest expression on this subject was made

in *Millennial Harbinger*, April, 1862, in reply to an article in a Presbyterian journal, entitled “Pre-Eminence of Preaching in Public Worship.” Campbell declared:

There was teaching, there was praying, there was exhortation in the Christian church; but preaching in the church or to the church, is not once named in the Christian Scriptures! Paul once, in his first letter to the church in Corinth, said he would declare to the Corinthians that gospel which he had preached to them, which also they had received, and in which they stood.

We preach, or report, or proclaim news. But who teaches news!! Who exhorts news!! We preach the gospel to unbelievers, to aliens, but never to Christians, or to those who have received it. Paul taught the Christians; he admonished, exhorted, commanded and reproved Christians, and on some occasions declared the glad tidings to them who had received them, but who seemed to have forgotten them, as he wrote to the Corinthians.

Campbell was not alone in recognition of the distinction between gospel and doctrine, preaching and teaching, or proclamation and instruction. In his comment on the word “teaching” in Romans 12:7, Moses E. Lard says:

The teaching here mentioned, I doubt not, consisted strictly in instructing the church. I did not include preaching the gospel to those without. This was the work more particularly of the prophet. The didaskalia was for members of the church, and had for its object their enlightenment in duty. It bore the same relation to those within the church, that preaching did to those without. The design of preaching was to bring men in; the design of teaching to perfect them when in. Teaching was the work chiefly of the overseers of the congregation.

In defining the expression “apt to teach” as relates to bishops, J. W. McGarvey said in *Missouri Christian Lectures*, page 193:

What teaching is this? It is not preaching, for preaching was addressed to the world, not to the church, and an elder's work as an elder was confined to the church. It is evidently the teaching prescribed in the second part of the apostolic commission, 'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.'

B. A. Hinsdale, a brilliant student among the advocates of the Restoration movement, makes this statement on page 13 of *Jesus As A Teacher*:

"While preaching and teaching are separate and distinct, they are closely related. First, in respect to matter. The preacher announces the gospel with a view to making converts or disciples; the teacher instructs (*didache*) or builds up the disciples in Christian doctrine or discipline."

The consecrated student of the new covenant scriptures must acknowledge distinctions made by the Holy Spirit. No inspired writer ever made a distinction without a difference. Jesus sustains in this age, the relationship of a monarch ruling over His kingdom. There are but two classes of persons in respect to a kingdom—aliens and citizens. It is God's purpose to enroll or enlist the first under the benign rule of His Son; and to perfect those who are thus enrolled, the citizens, in that character essential to enjoyment of "the everlasting kingdom." He designs to accomplish this by means of a communication addressed to the needs of those who compose these two groups.

The aliens are to be addressed by a *kerux*, a herald, or announcer. His message is the *kerygma*, and in this instance, it consists of glad tidings or good news. His work is described by the term *kerussein*, to discharge the office of a herald, to cry out, proclaim.

The citizens are to be tutored by a *didaskalos*. The course of instruction given to them is the *didache*, prepared by the envoys of the Christ. The work of teaching is described by

didaskhein, which signifies the examining, scrutinizing, illustrating, and establishing of a subject in a manner to influence the understanding or perception.

It is ridiculous to talk about *preaching* to immersed believers, in the light of the language of the Holy Spirit. You cannot evangelize those who are saved! The gospel of Christ was never addressed to those in the kingdom. The *kerygma* was intended to enroll men in the kingdom. In the commission to the envoys they were told to go into *all the world*. They were to herald the good news to *every creature*. Those who believed and were immersed would be saved. Believed what? The *kerygma*, the gospel, the message addressed to unbelievers and unimmersed. Did this consist of the entire body of new covenant scriptures? That would be absurd. There was not a one of the epistles written until many years after Pentecost, yet thousands heard the gospel and obeyed it on that day. Portions of the new covenant scriptures were not written until all of the original heralds but one had been long since deceased. Had they not preached a full gospel?

What is the attitude of most of the preachers of “The Church of Christ” toward these things today? It can best be described in the words of Jesus in the parable, “They made light of it, and went their ways.” Why should these truths so incense them? We think the answer is apparent. It was expressed by one of the leading members of the clergy of the Diana cult: “This our craft is in danger to be set at nought.” A very lucrative business has been built up in hiring out to “preach the gospel to the church.” Great institutions have been established to provide professionals for this work. Millions of dollars are invested to thus pamper sectarian pride. Publishing houses are concerned because of the investment in clerical organs such as “The Minister’s Monthly.”

If the members of “The Church of Christ” once come to see that they have been deluded and imposed upon, as the clergy

has always placed the majority of the saints in a state of dependency and helplessness, so that the many exist only to provide financial support for the top level few, there will be a revolution, as there ought to be. If it is demonstrated that God never once authorized, suggested, or hinted at such a thing as preaching *in* the church, or *to* the church, the idea of hiring a preacher for such a purpose *by* the church, will become as extinct as the Mauritian dodo, among those who revere the truth. For that reason the clergy in “The Church of Christ” will scoff at and deride what is herein said, in true sectarian fashion. They will urge their members not to read it, but to flee from it like the plague. And those who hire others to study and think for them will complacently ignore the great importance of these divine distinctions to the detriment of their souls and the cause of Christ. Here are a few results of such disregard for the truth in this connection.

1. Forfeiture of the claim to be honest and sincere restorationists. If we can arbitrarily set aside the divine revelation to justify and retain in our contemporary practice that which was not a part of the ancient order, we set the stage on which we cease to portray the role of restorers and merely dramatize our own twentieth century sectism.

2. Renunciation of the foundation upon which true restoration must be achieved. In his *Synopsis of Restoration*,¹ Alexander Campbell lists as the first goal, “The restoration of a pure speech, or the calling of Bible things by Bible names.” There are two great avenues of departure in interpretation. One is to create distinctions where the Holy Spirit makes none; the other to lose those distinctions which are legitimate and essential.

3. Creation of unscriptural officers and functions. This strikes at the heart of the polity of the primitive ekklesia. The church of God is a constitutional monarchy. The constitution delivered by the envoys of the Great King, provides for the

essential officers and their qualifications. The idea of “the minister” to preach to the community of saints is as foreign to the new covenant scriptures as is an abbot or archbishop.

4. Inauguration of a complex and creedal basis of fellowship without scriptural warrant. This is clearly true of “The Church of Christ.” These brethren equate “the gospel” with the whole scope of the new covenant scriptures. Thus one must believe (i.e., understand as they do) all that is contained in the epistolary writings before he can be admitted to their “fellowship.” If he holds a divergent view on the millennium, instrumental music, etc., he does not “believe the gospel” so cannot be “saved” according to the commission to the envoys. Nothing has contributed more to the confused exclusivist sectarian attitude of this modern party than their egregious error and flagrant fallacy at this point.

What is “the gospel”? C. H. Dodd, Professor Emeritus in the University of Cambridge, delivered the Bampton Lectures in America, at Columbia University, in 1950. In the third lecture, which bore the title *Gospel and Law*, he said:

The form and contents of the proclamation, the kerygma, can be recovered from the New Testament with reasonable accuracy. It recounts in brief the life and works of Jesus Christ, His conflicts, sufferings and death, and His resurrection from the dead, and it went on to declare that in these events he divinely guided history of Israel through long centuries had reached its climax. God Himself had acted decisively in this way to inaugurate His kingdom upon the earth. This was the core of all early Christian preaching, however it might be elaborated, illustrated and explained.

The great envoy who carried the message to the Gentile world, thus describes the content of the joyful announcement, embodied in the *kerygma*:

“Now, my brothers, I want to speak about the Gospel which I have previously preached to you, which you accepted, in which you are at present standing, and by which, if you remain faithful to the message I gave you, your salvation is being worked out— unless, of course, your faith had no meaning behind it at all. For I passed on to you Corinthians first of all the message I had myself received— that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures said He would; that He was buried and rose again on the third day, again as the Scriptures foretold” (1 Cor. 15:1-4. J. B. Phillips’ Translation).

Any person who proclaims these facts, preaches the gospel, and the same gospel which Paul preached. Reverting to our introduction, we affirm that Baptist preachers proclaim the gospel. Billy Graham proclaims the gospel, perhaps more forcibly than most others of our day. Many of the representatives of the various denominations in the domain of Christendom proclaim the gospel. This statement is regarded as sheer treason by partisan members of “The Church of Christ.” They immediately ask the question, “Do you say that Billy Graham is a gospel preacher?” That is a loaded question. The querist equates “a gospel preacher” and what he would call “a Church of Christ preacher” as one and the same. Certainly Graham is not affiliated with “The Church of Christ.” But, if by the term “gospel preacher” is simply meant “one who announces the good news” the answer is in the affirmative.

The objection is made that Graham cannot preach the gospel, because he does not tell those who believe it what the Holy Spirit informed penitent believers to do to be saved. Such an objection demonstrates that the objector is ignorant of the divine limitations placed upon the terms he uses. There is a difference in the gospel proclaimed to lead men to believe in the Christ, and the requirements demanded of those who believe the facts which make up that gospel. Peter did not tell the conscience-stricken Jews on Pentecost what to do until they asked him, but he had already proclaimed the gospel to them. It

would have been no less the gospel if they had never asked him, and thus he had never told them. If the narrative in Acts 2 had abruptly ended at verse 36, the gospel would have been proclaimed, as it certainly was.

Baptism is not a part of the gospel. It is a requisite of the response divinely commanded to those who have heard and believe the gospel. Paul said, “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” One might preach the gospel and then give the wrong instructions to those who believe it about what they should do. He might convince them that their sins were remitted before the divine act of pardon takes place. In such an event, the preacher would be as wrong about where salvation begins, as preachers in “The Church of Christ” are about where the gospel ends.

Peter did not proclaim a partial gospel, or a fragment of the good news, on Pentecost. The gospel was as fully proclaimed that day as it has ever been. But there was not a single New Testament book written for many years after that day. Those who entered into covenant relationship on that day, did so on the basis of a perfect gospel. I am convinced that some who announced the *kerygma*, and many who heard it, did not understand all of its implications, but that did not affect the content of the *kerygma* announced by the heralds under motivation of the Holy Spirit.

Those who were immersed continued steadfastly in the doctrine and fellowship of the envoys of Jesus. The *didache* in which they continued was not the *kerygma* they had accepted. It is true that Baptist doctrine is not the gospel. Neither is “Church of Christ” doctrine. Neither was the apostles’ doctrine. So the editor of *Gospel Guardian* did not prove what he set out to prove about Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and others. He did prove that he did not know of what the gospel of Christ consists.

There is much more to say, but I would avoid being

tiresome or boresome to the earnest reader, so will continue at another time, and in another article under the heading “Heralds and Herdsmen.”

END NOTES

1. The full title is “Synopsis of Reformation Principles and Objects,” which appears in an article titled, “Mr. Lynd on the Influence of the Holy Spirit,” *Millennial Harbinger* (December 1837): 530. —*Editor*

Heralds and Herdsmen

Restoration Review 1 (Winter 1960): 21

Restoration Review

The aged seer upon Patmos, whose task it was to close the prophetic revelation, fulfilled his mission with a written description of an unfolding panorama depicting the dramatic events in the lives of the saints until the tree of life is regained. His vision, like that of Isaiah and Ezekiel, began with a glimpse of the throne scene in heaven. John saw an open door, and heard a voice calling, "Come up hither and I will show you what must take place after this." He writes, "At once I was in the Spirit, and lo, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne!"

John had also been present with the other envoys after the resurrection of Jesus, when they had questioned if it was time to restore the kingdom to Israel. He had heard the reply, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority." The authority which places a ban, or creates a restraint, has the power to suspend it, and no doubt the last survivor of the twelve original envoys was filled with joy at the thought of being allowed to see the destiny of the movement which had been his very life since he was summoned from the chore of mending nets in the boat of Zebedee. His anxiety may have been heightened by the threat of Gnosticism which was then seducing the hearts of the believers, for he had been forced to publicly refute this false system being advocated by Cerinthus, who also lived in Ephesus.

He saw the scroll of the future held in the right hand “of him who was seated on the throne” and beheld that it was complete, for it was written within and on the back, and sealed with seven seals. If the scroll could be unrolled and spread open to his gaze, he would be able to know the fate of the saints unto the consummation of the age, for there was no room for addenda or appendix. His attention was arrested by a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seal?” The disappointment of the aged envoy was so intense when no one in heaven or on earth was located that he burst into uncontrolled weeping. At that juncture, one of the celestial elders bade him dry away his tears, and informed him that “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” Only one who had triumphed over the limitations of death could remove the seals concealing the future.

As John looked he saw a Lamb standing as it had been slain, and recognized that the Lion of Judah was the Lamb of God, for he saw him go and take the scroll from the right hand of the one who sat upon the throne. This was the signal for a new song by the heavenly chorus:

Worthy art thou to take the scroll and to open its seals,
for thou wast slain and by thy blood didst ransom
men for God from every tribe and tongue and people and
nation,
and hast made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on earth.

From this ascriptive chant we learn four things: (1) The Lamb demonstrated a worthiness to share in the purposes of him who sat on the throne, to which no other being in heaven, on

earth, or under the earth, could attain, and this was by virtue of his having been slain; (2) the supreme purpose of his submission to death was to ransom men for God by his blood; (3) the universality of the sacrifice as applicable to men “from every tribe and tongue and people and nation;” (4) the present status of the ransomed ones who have been made “a kingdom and priests to our God.” The saints of God constituted a kingdom of God while John was still living on earth. All who had been ransomed by blood, regardless of tribal origin, language, dialect, or nationality, are priests to God, a royal priesthood of all the holy ones.

Among the accountable beings on earth, there are but two relationships which can be sustained to such a kingdom. One is either a citizen or an alien. Regardless of how much one may admire the constitution, government, and benefits enjoyed by the citizens of a kingdom, he does not by mere feeling or regard become a citizen, but can only become such by compliance with the terms and regulations established by proper authority. The authority which determines the right or method of admissibility does not reside with the alien, but is vested in the sovereign state. The alien cannot dictate the terms upon which he will be received. Those terms are proposed by the government, and the alien can accept or reject them, depending upon his evaluation of the blessings to be enjoyed which do not accrue to his former allegiance. It is obvious that the induction of one into citizenship status does not by that act make of him either an informed citizen or a good one. He may, by virtue of prior reading of the laws and statutes, and because of an interest in jurisprudence, have acquired a considerable knowledge of the responsibilities of citizenship, but this is not necessarily a requirement of induction, else no one could ever become a citizen except the most learned and erudite.

The design of the kingdom of heaven is to so qualify and stimulate men that they may be zealous to confirm their call and election, so that there may be richly provided for them an

entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This requires a transformation which can only be wrought when “we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.” This change is not an instantaneous one. It is a growth, not a gift. The induction into citizenship, once accomplished, requires no repetition, but the citizen practices over and over those things inherent in his new state, and as he does so becomes proficient and skilled.

Since there is a difference in the process of becoming a citizen, and in the fulfillment of the responsibilities of citizenship, it was necessary that the King of kings provide two distinct messages; one addressed to aliens and adapted to their needs, the other addressed to citizens and adapted to their changed condition. The first of these messages was to be a proclamation; the second a course of instruction. In view of the nature of these messages, two distinct types of servants or functionaries were provided, each requiring special qualifications consonant with the office or function to be performed. Each of these was designated by terms in common usage among the Greeks, and employed by them to denominate separate and specific agents in the natural or political realms, whose operations would never be confused, one with another.

The message to aliens was a proclamation of glad tidings, and since the bearers of tidings were heralds, it was appropriate to so regard those who carried the message of the Great King decreeing amnesty to all who would acknowledge his sovereignty and enroll as citizens under his rule. The word for herald was *kerux*; the message he carried was a *kerugma*. For this reason the envoy from Tarsus, declared, “It pleased God through the folly of the thing preached to save those who believe.” The King James Version leaves the impression that God chose to save men by preaching, or by the act of proclaiming. There was no reason for the Greek philosophers to regard public proclamation as foolish, for the announcement or proclamation of news was a

regular feature of their civic and social life. But the word here is *kerugma*. It refers to the message, not to the method. The envoy declared, “We proclaim Christ crucified.” This was the thing regarded as folly!

Not all of the news proclaimed by a herald would be propitious or favorable. There is nothing inherent in the word “herald” to indicate the nature of his tidings, although some men became associated with auspicious and inspiring news until the very sight of them was reassuring. A good example is found in the circumstances surrounding the death of Absalom. David was sitting between the two gates of the city awaiting word from the battle. His watchman was standing on the roof of the gate with his eyes trained toward the plain.

When the ten young men who constituted Joab’s private bodyguard had dispatched Absalom, Ahimaaz asked permission to carry tidings to the king. Joab, knowing that Ahimaaz was recognized as a bearer of good news, refused to allow him to go “because the king’s son is dead.” Instead, he ordered the Cushite to run. Ahimaaz persisted in trying to secure consent to run, and Joab, thinking the Cushite was far enough in advance, finally allowed him to go. Ahimaaz ignored the shortest route over the hills, and ran by way of the Jordan valley through level country, so out ran the Cushite. The watchman on the wall called out to David that he saw a man running alone. The king, knowing that this could not represent a routed army fleeing, said, “If he is alone, there are tidings in his mouth.” When the watchman announced the identity of the runner as Ahimaaz, the king said, “He is a good man, and comes with good tidings.” Ahimaaz was reserved for special dispatches of an optimistic type.

Since the message offered by Jesus to aliens is one of good news, another term is used to designate the proclaimers of the divine *kerugma*— *evangelists*. This is a transliteration of the Greek term, which consists of a prefix meaning “good” and a word meaning “news, or tidings.” Even the casual reader will

observe the word “angel” in the Anglicized form, and realize that a message and a messenger are inherent in the term. So Thayer says of *euangelistes*, “A biblical and ecclesiastical word, ‘a bringer of good tidings, an evangelist.’ The name is given in the N. T. to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles.” One is a preacher or herald because he proclaims; he is an evangelist because the message he bears is good news.

Among the Greeks, Hermes, son of Zeus and Maia, was both the herald of the gods, and the god of the heralds. In the Odyssey he is depicted as the messenger of the gods, and the conductor of the dead to Hades. Because a herald was regarded as one who traveled about constantly carrying messages, Hermes was reputed to be the god of roads and doorways, the guardian of travelers, and the regulator of communications and commerce. A tradition existed in Phrygia that Zeus and one of his sons had long before visited the area in human form. When Paul and Barnabas arrived in Lystra and healed the congenital cripple, the superstitious natives cried out, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men.” They called Barnabas Zeus, and because Paul was the chief speaker, they called him Hermes. Little did they realize that these men were truly heralds of the One God.

We are occasionally asked why the RSV uses the names Zeus and Hermes, whereas the King James Version employs the names Jupiter and Mercury. The latter are the Roman names, the former the Greek names, for the same characters in mythology. With the overthrow of Targuinius Superbus, and the founding of the Roman Republic, grave times were experienced because of the unsettled conditions. Intestine warfare disturbed the agricultural economy and rendered commerce difficult. Famine was ever a threat because of the scarcity of grain. It was decided to propitiate the gods by importing Hermes to Rome, where he was given the Italian name Mercurius, as the god of merchandise (*merx*) and of merchants (*mercatores*). The temple constructed for the god on Aventine Hill, became the board of

exchange for the corn merchants. “The Winged Mercury” is but the Italian version of Hermes.

The mythological figure is familiar to us today, having been adopted as the symbol for various commercial organizations. He is the emblem of the florist trade whose promoters offer to *carry your messages* of congratulation and condolence to any part of the land through use of the telegraph. The motto “Say it with flowers” always appears in conjunction with Hermes wearing the *petasos*, or winged cap; the *talaria*, or winged sandals; and carrying the *caduceus*, or herald’s staff. The word *caduceus* is merely a Latin adaptation of the Greek *kerukeion*.

Because of etymology and derivation the words “herald” and “evangelist” have inherent in them the idea of travel, or of going from place to place, bearing a message. It is this fact which lends strength to the quotation by Paul in Romans 10:15, “And how can men preach except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who preach good news!” Literally, this would be, “How can men fulfill the mission of a herald unless they are sent . . . How beautiful are the feet of those who evangelize.” The figure is even more striking in the passage in Isaiah (52:7) from which the quotation is taken, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings, who publishes peace, who brings good tidings of good, who publishes salvation . . .” We note that heralds are sent, they travel across the mountains, they bring good news, they publish salvation.

But in these days we are treated to something novel in the way of interpretation. Men have created a system for gain, and to sanctify it they have borrowed or appropriated the livery of heaven. We hear of “located evangelists” and we are solemnly informed that travel is not inherent in the word evangelist. The wings have been clipped from the cap and sandals of Hermes, being no longer required. The caduceus has been planted in the

pulpit, and the herald now has a “sacred desk” to lean upon. The news is no longer *taken*, those who want it must come after it. The feet of the evangelist are no longer beautiful. He does not need feet. It is the feet of the needy that must travel. One reads reports of “gospel meetings” and learns how many came across the mountains to hear “the preaching.” The “angel” has been knocked out of evangelist, and a new “angel” has been devised by which hired heralds evangelize the saved!

It is axiomatic that not even a divine power can provide a rule of action which is proof against tampering and wresting by men who have a personal axe to grind. Man seeks always to rationalize in behalf of his own desires and acts. He is predisposed to justify what appeals to him. This temperament has been responsible for many of the abuses which are tolerated to the detriment of the plea for restoration. In the particular area of this thesis it has resulted in creation of a one-man pastor system, rendered the God-ordained office of bishop a hollow mockery and satire, robbed the saints of their rights and prerogatives, and made the sacred doctrine of the priesthood of all believers an empty profession. In all too many instances the motivating factor has been a love for money, a desire for gain, which makes of the disciples of Him who became poor for our sakes, mere tributaries to those who would profit from recounting the story of His impoverishment.

Professional dispensers of the water of life, hard pressed to find some semblance of justification for their official status, seek to disguise the fact that they are pastors by labeling themselves evangelists. One might as well call the factory superintendent a “traveling salesman,” or designate a stationary engineer as a “field agent.” These have confused Hermes the herald, with his son Pan, the shepherd god. They have swapped the caduceus for the shepherd’s crook. The unbiased scholarship of the world is against them. The distinction between the message to the alien and the citizen is understood by the unprejudiced, and the nature of the evangelist is clearly portrayed. Only those who are

ignorant of the language of the Spirit would ever argue that the saved can be evangelized. Consider the following quotations gleamed from several sources.

1. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Under “Evangelist”):

It will be seen that as an order in the ministry, the evangelist precedes that of the pastor and teacher, a fact which harmonizes with the character of the work each is still recognized as doing. The evangelist has no fixed place of residence, but moves about in different localities, preaching the gospel to those ignorant of it before. As these are converted and united to Jesus Christ by faith, the work of the teacher and pastor begins, to instruct them further in the things of Christ and build them up in the faith.

2. *Hastings’ Dictionary of the Bible* (Footnote to article “Church”):

The evangelist was a wandering missionary working on new ground and not concerned with the organization of churches already established. In 2 Timothy 4:5 the word is used in a general (preacher of the gospel), and not in a special sense.

3. *The Temple Dictionary of the Bible*:

The higher functions did not exclude that of the Evangelist, since both Apostles and Prophets were also bringers of the good news. But the Apostles were possessed of special authority, and the Evangelist could not, like them, bestow the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:14) nor did he enjoy the special inspiration of the prophet. He simply communicated the good news to those who had not heard it. He was not a Pastor with oversight of a particular flock, nor a Teacher whose business it was to instruct the saints.

4. *Buck’s Theological Dictionary*:

One who publishes glad tidings; a messenger or preacher of good news. The persons denominated evangelists were next in order to the apostles and were sent by them not to settle in any particular place, but to travel among the infant churches, and ordain ordinary officers, and finish what the apostles had begun. Of this kind were Philip, Mark, Silas, etc. The office of a modern missionary, in some respects answers to that of a primitive evangelist.

5. *Life and Epistles of Saint Paul* (Conybeare and Howson):

The term evangelist is applied to those missionaries, who like Philip and Timothy, traveled from place to place, to bear the glad tidings of Christ to unbelieving nations and individuals. Hence it follows that the apostles were all evangelists, although there were also evangelists who were not apostles.

6. *Lectures On The Ephesians* (R. W. Dale, Birmingham, England):

“Evangelists” were in our modern phrase “Missionaries.” Their work was to effect the conversion of men by preaching the gospel, and to bring them into the fellowship of existing churches, or to found new churches where no churches already existed.

7. *Harpers Bible Dictionary*:

Evangelist is the name given in the New Testament to one who traveled from place to place proclaiming the gospel.

8. *Dictionary of the Bible* (John D. Davis, D.D., Ph.D., LL.D.):

An order of men in the primitive church distinct from apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11). Their name implied that their special function was to

announce the glad tidings to those before ignorant of them, and as they were not pastors of particular churches, they were able to go from place to place, preaching to those who were without the Christian pale.

9. *Encyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature* (John McClintock, D.D. and James Strong, S.T.D.):

The name of an order of men included in the constitution of the Apostolical church. The term is applied in the New Testament to a certain class of Christian teachers who were not fixed to any particular spot, but traveled independently, or under the direction of one or more of the apostles, for the purpose of propagating the gospel . . . It follows from what has been said, that the calling of the evangelist is expressed by the word *kerussein* “preach,” rather than *didaskein* “teach” or *parakalein* “exhort.” It is the proclamation of the glad tidings to those who have not known them, rather than the instruction and pastoral care of those who have believed and been baptized. This is also what we gather from 2 Timothy 4:2, 5. Timotheus is to “preach the word” and in doing this he is to fulfill the work of an evangelist.

10. *General History of the Christian Religion and Church* (Augustus Neander):

This word (evangelist) is to be understood in the sense of the New Testament, i.e., as designating a teacher not connected with any particular church, but traveling about as a missionary to preach the gospel.

11. *History of the Christian Church* (Philip Schaff):

Evangelists. Itinerant preachers, delegates and fellow-laborers of the apostles— such men as Mark, Luke, Timothy, Silas, Epaphras, Trophimus and Apollos. They may be compared to modern missionaries.

12. *Church History* (Professor Kurtz):

From 2 Timothy 4:5 and Acts 21:8 (8:5) it follows that Evangelists are itinerant preachers of the gospel and assistants of the apostles.

13. *The Christian Ecclesia* (Fenton John Anthony Hart, D.D.):

First there are evangelists, doubtless men like Titus and Timothy (2 Tim. 4:5) and Tychicus and Epaphras, who went about from place to place preaching the gospel. Speaking generally the basis of this function was preaching the gospel to those who had not heard it, the work of an evangelist.

14. *Ecclesiastical History* (Eusebius Pamphilius):

Afterwards leaving their country, they performed the office of evangelist to those who had not yet heard the faith, whilst with a noble ambition to proclaim Christ they also delivered to them the books of the holy gospels. After laying the foundation of the faith in foreign parts as the particular object of their mission, and after appointing others as shepherds of the flocks, and committing to these the care of those that had been recently introduced, they went again to other regions and nations with the grace and cooperation of God.

15. *The History of Israel* (Heinrich Ewald):

For his office the name of an Evangelist at once became customary; and as everything Christian still continues to spring as an original activity from its higher necessities, so Philip became undoubtedly the first of the numerous Evangelists. The office demanded especially a life of itineracy.

There is no point in multiplying further the quotations available in our research files, for all agree in substance. The modern “minister” of a congregation with elders is not an evangelist at all. He operates under false pretense when he so

designates himself. He is a pastor, a hired pastor— nothing more nor less. If he believes that the office of pastor belongs to the bishops, he should in all honesty abdicate his position, and cease to sail under false colors. If he wants to be an evangelist, let him do the work of an evangelist. He has no right to call himself an evangelist while performing a function not related to the term as the Holy Spirit used it.

To those who feel that the survival of the church is dependent upon the wisdom of men, rather than upon the providence of God; and who fear that with the dismissal of an unscriptural system, truth will perish from the earth, we commend the following article by G. S. Judd, entitled “Churches in Kentucky,” which appeared in *Apostolic Times*, July, 1876.

Theoretically, we are commonly considered to be scripturally organized when the congregation has a plurality of elders and deacons. Practically, however, a congregation is not considered to be in efficient working order unless there are, in addition to this, a clerk and a preacher or what we are in the habit of calling an evangelist, which is a misnomer and a solecism, since the preachers are called, and not sent, unless the church gets tired of a preacher and sends him adrift; then he is, perhaps, an evangelist after the modern sort. The eldership is expected to be rather a small volume, a compend or epitome of all the Christian graces and excellencies, and then to be “lookers on in Venice.” It is always held that an elder, especially at his election, must be apt to teach, but the notion that they should ever attempt it is obsolete or obsolescent, so much so that in a general way an elder is thought to be a little presumptuous who undertakes it. From sheer disuse the eldership has become a mere cipher placed before the preacher. The whole expression as it now stands, is only a sort of religious decimal instead of a unit of any value. The question has not yet been decided whether or not we would not know more about the Bible, and be better off in every particular had we not one single solitary preacher in any congregation in Kentucky as a pastor. Will you please think

about it?

A Feigned Fiscal Fiat

Restoration Review 2 (Spring 1960): 82

Restoration Review

The modern religious system known as “The Church of Christ” claims to be a replica of the primitive ekklesia of God. The motto frequently voiced by its adherents is, “We speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent.” A careful scrutiny of the facts will reveal that both the claim and the motto are misleading. Actually, by the simple process of wresting some scriptural passages, and ignoring others, certain legalistic formulae have been developed, and these are dogmatically defined and arbitrarily asserted to be “the plan of God” in their respective spheres. Because of the sanctity of party traditions, these are expected to be received without question.

At some future date I may demonstrate that what is called “the plan of salvation” was never announced in its current form by the original heralds of the Messiah, and that somewhere along the line an extra “step” has even been inserted. I may also prove that the ekklesia of the firstborn ones had no official title, and most of the radio sermons on the subject “What Name Shall The Church Wear?” are as thin as the air over which they are broadcast. But in this article I will confine myself to an examination of what is referred to by many of my brethren as “God’s plan of giving.” Since this pertains to money, it will be of great interest to “The Church of Christ,” as the raising and expenditure of funds is now one of the chief items of debate

between the two most prominent non-instrument factions.

It is almost universally accepted that the contribution of money to the “church treasury” each first day of the week is a part of *the worship* of the church. In many tracts and periodicals “giving of our means” is listed among “the items of worship.” It is well to remark that in the King James Version, the word “worship” is a translation of at least twelve different Greek terms, not one of which ever applies directly to what is done in a corporate sense on the Lord’s Day. The expression “the worship” is not once found in the sacred oracles. Since the entire life of the early disciples was an expression of covenant relationship with God, it would have been difficult indeed to single out any specific act or expression to label “an item of worship” to the exclusion of other things. We think it would be especially difficult to prove that giving money each Lord’s Day, regardless of need, was bound upon the believers by the envoys of the Christ.

To gain a proper perspective of the doctrine of “The Church of Christ” on this subject, I quote from an article by John Hardin, appearing in *Firm Foundation*, December 23, 1958, under the heading, “Financing the Lord’s Work.” This brother, under a sub-head “God’s Plan,” writes thus:

It is the same old story of whether we believe God’s way to be best, or not. The true Christian will allow God to instruct him in all his religious activities through His word. As in everything else, God has not left to our imagination how we should obtain the necessary finances to fulfill the obligations of the church. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store. . . .”

This is the “*when*” of our church contribution. God authorizes no other time for our offering to be taken. The denominational practice of church officers knocking at the

door of their members' houses to collect their money is *unscriptural*.

If Christians think so little of the Lord's work that they will not fulfill the God-given instruction to assemble together (Heb. 10:25) upon the first day of each week and give their money (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), then all the money they give at other times and by other means is not counted unto them by God. God wants his instructions carried out in his own way.

This is typical of the reasoning in most "Church of Christ" periodicals. The writer places an interpretation upon 1 Corinthians 16: 1, 2, and forthwith assumes that the interpretation is "God's way." "The true Christian" must accept this as the instruction of God, and thus will regard every other procedure as "a denominational practice" and "unscriptural." The interpretation becomes "the God-given instruction" and the interpreter arbitrarily affirms that "all the money they give at other times and by other means is not accounted to them by God." This is hardly remaining silent where the Bible is silent. In fact, it sounds as if the writer has an additional revelation, as well as a rather ill-advised interpretation. And while God may not have "left to our imagination" . . . "the *when* of our church contribution," it is possible that our brother has used his imagination on what God has left us. Just what is involved in 1 Corinthians 16:1-4?

The Background

The apostle Paul was always concerned with helping the needy. In the year 45, in company with Barnabas, he carried assistance from Antioch to Jerusalem, which had been hard hit by a famine in the days of Claudius Caesar. In the year 50 he returned to Jerusalem to help resolve the conflict over circumcision. A division was avoided by an agreement that Paul would carry the good news to the Gentiles who would not be

required to be circumcised; while James, Peter, and John would carry the message to the Jews, who would be taught not to forsake Moses, and to continue to circumcise their children. The only request made by the “pillars” of the Jerusalem congregation was that Paul remember the poor. We have his own testimony that this he was “forward to do.”

The community of saints at Corinth was probably planted in 52. In the spring of 57, Paul wrote them from Ephesus. Being concerned about maintaining a proper feeling among all of the congregations, and especially of confirming his love for the Jerusalem brethren, he proposed to raise “a certain contribution” (Rom. 15:26) among the Gentile congregations, which would then be taken to Jerusalem and used for relief of the poor saints. He was not certain that it would be accepted by the Jewish congregation, and requested others to strive together with him in prayer relative to this matter. He passed along the word about this fund-raising campaign to the Galatian congregations, and gave instructions regarding it in the closing portion of his letter to the Corinthians.

“The collection for the saints” (1 Cor. 16:1) was the “certain contribution” (Rom. 15:26). Upon the first day of every week, each one was requested to *lay by him in store*, as he had been prospered of God. The purpose of this was to avoid the necessity of each one having to go out and secure funds after arrival of the apostle. Each would have his offering ready to turn over to the ones designated by letter to carry it to Jerusalem. The apostle would accompany these chosen servants if it was considered necessary. Subsequent information shows that he did go with them and that he was thrown into prison after his arrival in Jerusalem.

1. There is no indication that the congregation had been taking up a contribution on each Lord’s Day before this time. If this had been an item of worship, the instruction here given seems very strange indeed.

2. Paul planted the congregation at Corinth some five years before this. If a monetary contribution was essential as an *act of worship*, why did he not give them the order at first? Why did he allow them to continue five years with an incomplete “program of worship”?

3. There is no indication that Corinth continued to take up a collection every first day of the week after this. The money they laid aside on the basis of this injunction was to continue until Paul’s arrival. At that time it was all transported to Jerusalem.

4. The “collection for the saints” here enjoined was a special contribution for a special purpose to meet a special need at a special time. When that need was met, this collection ceased.

But was this a *public* collection each first day of the week, performed as a corporate act by the congregation? The indication is that it was not. Rather, each member laid aside in his own home each Lord’s Day the amount which he felt able to spare. When Paul came, all brought their little treasure accumulated by stockpiling, and turned it over to him and the approved brethren. So revolutionary is this idea, and so devastating to a lot of theories and discussions about “church treasuries” that one who even suggests such a thing must be prepared for an unpopular existence. However, since truth and not public acclaim is our goal, let us calmly investigate the matter, devoid of all prejudice and traditional partisan bias. The real question is simply one of correct interpretation. What is meant by the expression “lay by him in store”? The Greek for “by him” is *par eauto*. Just what does it mean?

I. Lexicons

1. *Liddell and Scott* in their lexicon based on the work of Franz Passow, which was in turn based on that of Johann

Gottlob Schneider, cite a passage in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* 3.13.3 where the expression occurs, and which is rendered, "at his own house."

2. *Joseph Thayer* in his English translation of Grimm's Wilke's lexicon, says, "by him, that is, at his home."

3. *Arndt and Gingrich* in their lexicon based on the monumental work by Bauer, translate, "to put something aside."

4. *Green's Lexicon* gives the rendering, "with one's self, at his home."

5. *G. Abbott-Smith* in the *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament*, simply says, "at his own home."

II. New Testament Versions

1. *John Wycliffe* (about A.D. 1380):

But of the gaderyngis of money that ben maad in to seyntis, as Y ordeynede in the chirchis of Galathia, so also do ye o dai of the wouke. Ech of you kepe at hym silf, kepyng that that plesith to him, that whanne Y come, the gaderyngis ben not maad.

2. *William Tyndale* (about A.D. 1534):

Of the gadderynge for the sayntes, as I have ordeyned in the congregacions of Galacia, even so do ye. Upon some sondaye let everyone of you put a syde at home and laye up what soever he thinketh mete, that ther be no gaderinges when I come.

3. *The New Testament in English*, by Msgr. R. A. Knox:

And now about the collection that is being made for the saints; follow the plan which I have prescribed for the

Galatian churches. Each of you should put aside, on the first day of the week, what he can afford to spare, and save it up, so that there may be no need for a collection at the time of my visit.

4. *Confraternity Version*

Now concerning the collection being made for the saints, as I have ordered the churches of Galatia, so do you also. On the first day of the week, let each one of you put aside at home and lay up whatsoever he has a mind to, so that the collections may not have to be made after I come.

5. *The New Testament— An American Translation*, by Edgar J. Goodspeed:

About the collection for God's people, I want you to do as I told the churches of Galatia to do. On the first day of every week each of you is to put aside and store up whatever he gains, so that money will not have to be collected after I come.

6. *The New Testament— A New Translation*, by James Moffatt:

With regard to the collection for the saints, you must carry out the same arrangements as I made for the churches of Galatia. On the first day of the week, let each of you put aside a sum from his weekly gains, so that the money may not have to be collected when I come.

7. *The New Testament— A New Translation in Plain English*, by C. K. Williams:

Now as to the collection for the people of God; you should do what I directed the churches of Galatia to do. On the first day of the week let each of you put aside and save something from his earnings; so that the money has not all to be collected when I come.

8. *Berkeley Version:*

Relative to the collection for the saints, you better do as I suggested to the churches of Galatia. As each week's first day comes around, let each of you personally set aside in proportion to what he has gained, so there may be no collecting when I arrive.

9. *Centenary Translation*, by Helen Barrett Montgomery:

Now concerning the offering for the saints, you also are to do as I directed the church of Galatia. On the first day of each week let each of you put aside something, keeping it in store as he may prosper, so that when I come there may be no collections going on.

10. *The Authentic Version*, by Hugh J. Schonfield:

Now as regards the fund for the saints, follow the same arrangement as I have made with the communities of Galatia. The day after the sabbath let each of you put by savings as he has prospered, so that collections do not have to be made when I come.

11. *Revised Standard Version:*

Now concerning the contribution for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that contributions need not be made when I come.

12. *The Emphasized Bible*, by Joseph Bryant Rotherham:

Now concerning the collection which is for the saints, just as I directed the assemblies of Galatia, so also do ye: Upon the first of the week let each one of you put by itself in store as he may be prospering, lest as soon as I come, then collections should be in progress.

III. Commentators

1. Dean Henry Alford, in his *Greek New Testament*:

Let each of you lay up at home in store whatsoever he may by prosperity have acquired.

2. Prin. David Brown, D.D., Free Church College, Aberdeen, Scotland, in *The International Illustrated Commentary*:

Note here that it is not a weekly offering at their meetings for public worship, but each one at his own home should lay by his own weekly contributions, to be handed in only at the last as one entire gift. The weekly offering at the church meetings was a subsequent modification of this, which soon became universal.

3. W. F. Howard, Prof. of New Testament Language and Literature, Handsworth Wesleyan Theological College, Birmingham, England, in *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*:

On that day each was to put aside at home something from his weekly earnings, forming a little hoard, so that there might be no hasty effort to raise funds on Paul's arrival.

4. R. C. H. Lenski:

Each member is to deposit with himself each Sunday the amount of his gift for the week and preserve it as a store or treasure, *thesaurizo*. The particle completes the idea of the main verb: "Let him lay by by treasuring up" ... Each member is to keep the growing amount by him, *par eauto*, in his own home, and is not to deposit it with the church at once. The probable reason for his advice is the fact that at this early date churches supervised by Paul were not yet organized to the extent of having official treasurers who were duly appointed to take charge of congregational funds ... Paul's purpose in ordering contributions from Sunday to Sunday is that, when he

finally arrives in Corinth, the work may be entirely done. The plural *logiai* “collections” refers to the accumulations made by the individuals; each would have his *logia*. The present tense *ginontai* accords with this: the collections are not to proceed after Paul arrives. Then it will be necessary that each individual simply bring in his accumulation.

5. G. G. Findley, B. A., in *Expositor's Greek New Testament*:

Verse 2 refers to the rule previously laid down for Galatia; on every first day of the week let each of you by himself (at home)

6. F. W. Grosheide, Th.D., in *The New International Commentary*:

Upon the first day, i.e., on every Sunday. The reference is not to the church services but to a personal assignment which everyone had to perform. But the fact that Paul speaks of the first day of the week and calls that the day for the collection implies that Sunday was destined for the special service of the Lord. Paul trusts the Corinthians; he does not ask them to hand in their collection on a weekly basis, they are allowed to keep the collected money and thus little by little a sufficient amount will be saved up.

7. Dr. Herman Olshausen, in *Biblical Commentary*:

Certainly it may not be inferred from this passage that collections took place among the congregations on the Sabbath, for it was Paul's intention that each should make a suitable contribution at home.

8. Arthur S. Way, in *The Letters of Saint Paul*:

On the first day of the week, let each of you set apart a certain portion of his profits, forming a little hoard, so that the raising of the contributions may not be postponed till my actual arrival.

9. F. Godet, in *Commentary on First Corinthians*:

The words *by him*, denote an act done by each in his own house, and not, as some have thought, a gift bestowed in the church and known to the giver only.

10. Marcus Dods, D. D., in *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*:

It is expressly said that each was to lay “by him,” that is, not in a public fund, but at home in his own purse — what he wished to give.

11. *The Pulpit Commentary*:

The Greek phrase implies that the laying up was to be done *at home*, but when the money was accumulated, it was doubtless brought to the assembly and handed over to the presbyters.

12. *Scott’s Bible Commentary*:

Some are of opinion, that the sums, thus set apart, were brought to the treasury of the church at the time; but the words do not seem to admit of this interpretation; and if each separately laid by the sum which he purposed to give, the whole would be brought together at once, when necessary, without any trouble in soliciting contributions.

13. John Peter Lange, D. D., in *Commentary on the Bible*:

***Par eauto*, at home. The phrase is therefore conclusive against the prevailing opinion that the collection was taken up in the church. It was an individual and private affair.**

14. *Comprehensive Bible Commentary*:

Some of the Greek fathers rightly observe here, that this advice was given for the poorer among them. They

were to lay by, from week to week, and not bring into the common treasury, that by this means, their contributions might be easy to themselves, and yet grow into a fund for the relief of their brethren.

15. *Critical Commentary:*

Rather storing up whatever he may prosper in, that when I come no gatherings may take place: for then will be not the time for collecting, but for producing the sum of what has been week by week hoarded at home in profits from trade.

16. *Catholic Commentary on the Holy Scriptures:*

“First Day,” i.e., Sunday. “With himself,” by him, in his own keeping. It was not then to be handed in at Mass, apparently.

17. *D. D. Whedon, in Commentary on the New Testament:*

Lay by him in store— so keeping a little savings bank at home, and bringing the whole to the church when Paul arrives.

18. *Albert Barnes, in Popular Family Commentary:*

Let him lay up at home, treasuring up as he has been prospered. The Greek phrase “by himself,” means, probably, the same as at home. Let him set it apart; let him designate a certain portion; let him do this by himself, when he is at home, when he can calmly look on the evidence of his prosperity . . . The phrase in Greek “treasuring up” may mean that each one was to put the part which he had designated into the common treasury. This interpretation seems to be demanded by the latter part of the verse. They were to lay it by, and to put it into the common treasury, that there might be no trouble of collecting when he should come. Or it may, perhaps, mean that they were individually to treasure it up, having

designated in their own mind the sum which they could give, and have it in readiness when he should come.

IV. Word Study Books

1. *Critical and Exegetical Handbook* (Meyer):

Kata mion sabbaton “On each first day of the week.”
Par eauto “at home.” *Par eauto titheto*— cannot refer to the laying of money in the assembly, “let him lay up in store at home whatever he succeeds in.”

2. *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (A. T. Robertson):

Lay by him in store (*par heautoi titheto thesaurizon*)
“By himself, in his home, treasuring it.”

3. *Word Studies of the New Testament* (Marvin R. Vincent):

Lay by him in store. Literally, put by himself, treasuring. Put by at home.

V. Dissenting Views

1. *James Macknight, D.D. in The Apostolical Epistles*:

The apostle’s meaning is that every first day of the week each of the Corinthians was to separate, from the gains of the preceding week, such a sum as he could spare, and put it into the treasury; that there might be no occasion to make collections when the apostle came. By this method the Corinthians, without inconveniency, might bestow a greater gift, than if they had given it all at once. The common translation . . . viz., “lay by him in store,” is inconsistent with the last part of the verse, “that there may be no gathering when I come” for according to that translation, the collections would still have been to make at

the apostle's coming.

Putting in into the treasury. So *thesaurizo* may be translated. The apostle means the treasury of the Church, or some chest placed at the door of the church to receive their gifts. For although the Corinthians had separated a sum weekly for the saints, yet if they kept it in their own possession, the collections, as was observed in the preceding note, must still have been to make when the apostle came, contrary to his intention.

2. Charles Hodge, D.D. in Commentary on First Corinthians:

Everyone was to lay by himself, i.e., most modern commentators say at home, *par eauto*. Compare *pros eauto* in Luke 24:12; see also John 20:10. The direction then is that everyone should lay aside at home whatever he was able to give, thus treasuring up his contributions. To this interpretation it may be objected that the whole expression is thus obscure and awkward. "Let every one at home place, treasuring up, what he has to give." The words do not mean to lay by at home, but to lay by himself, i.e., let him take to himself what he means to give. What he has to do with it, or where he has to deposit it, is not expressed. The word *thesaurizo* means putting into the treasury, or hoarding up, and is perfectly consistent with the assumption that the place of deposit was some common treasury, and not every man's own house. If Paul directed this money to be laid up *at home*, why was the first day of the week selected? It is evident that the first day must have offered some special facility for doing what was here enjoined. The only reason that can be assigned for requiring the thing to be done on the first day or the week, is, that on that day the Christians were accustomed to meet, and what each one laid aside from his weekly gains could be treasured up, i.e., put into the common treasury of the church.

The scholarly John Peter Lange, in his reply to the above,

contained in a footnote on the same page, has this to say:

This is well argued in behalf of the solemn observance of the Lord's Day; but we can no more change the meaning of *par eauto* than we can parallel phrases in other languages. They are idiomatic expressions for "at home" and honestly require that we should so interpret. This is the rendering which even the ancient Syriac version gives it.

VI. Ancient Testimony

1. *John Chrysostom*, in his Forty-third Homily on First Corinthians:

He said not, Let him bring it into the church, lest they might feel ashamed because of the smallness of the sum; but having by gradual additions swelled his contribution, let him then produce it, when I come, but for the present lay it up, saith he, at home, and make thine house a church; thy little box a treasury. Become a guardian of sacred wealth, a self-ordained steward of the poor. The benevolent mind assigns thee to this priesthood.

Personal Conclusion

1. There is no scriptural ground for presenting money to a congregational treasurer each first day of the week as a corporate *act of worship*.

2. The primitive ekklesia of God met human needs at various times and in various ways. At Jerusalem, certain saints sold their real estate and personal property and laid the proceeds at the feet of the apostles who administered it daily according to individual needs. Later, the multitude of disciples selected seven servants to dispense the bounty. Funds

contributed by Antioch to the poor in Judea were conveyed to the elders by chosen representatives. These funds were accumulated after report of a drouth, whereupon the disciples determined, every man according to his ability, “to send relief unto the brethren.”

3. The collection which Paul authorized among the Gentile congregations, mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2, was “a certain contribution” which “it pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make.” There is no real evidence the money was ever placed in the hands of a middleman acting as a “church treasurer.” Every cent of it was turned over to Paul and his companions to carry to Jerusalem, the only purpose for which the money was collected or accumulated by each person.

4. Those who traveled and labored in behalf of the cause of Christ were sometimes supported by the disciples acting in conjunction, or corporately; and at other times by individuals. They were “brought on their way by the church” (Acts 15:3), or by men like Gaius (3 John 6) . We conclude that the expression “bring forward on their journey” refers, in both instances, to sharing in the expenses.

5. The idea that a gift of money made by all on the Lord’s Day as a public exhibition of worship is “God’s plan of giving” is sheer modern Church-of-Christism. It virtually precludes almsgiving, and seeks to channel all charity through the hands of men, who claim a right, once the money is turned over to them, to spend it as they see fit. This is “taxation without representation.”

6. A congregation of saints may agree to bring their financial gifts and pool them for the common good on each Lord’s Day. That is the privilege of the congregation, but such an arrangement should be regarded as one of mutual human judgment and convenience. To demand it arbitrarily and regard it as equivalent to the Lord’s Supper as a corporate expression

of worship is no credit to the scholarship of those who so regard it.

7. To announce that those who do not supinely submit to this system of having their money taken from them and often spent without their consent, will be in danger of hell fire, is popery in the first degree. To affirm that God will not accept the charitable gifts of His people at any other time and place, is presumption, pure and simple. In the primitive church preachers gathered money for the [. . . .] dispense the bounty. Funds contributed by Antioch to the poor in [. . . .] poor widows; in the modern church poor widows must gather it for the preachers. We are a long way from Jerusalem.

[In the previous paragraph, sentence fragments appear to be missing in the original publication. We have supplied bracketed ellipses where fragments are likely missing. In an email of 02/09/2010, Leroy Garrett suggested a rendering of: “In the primitive church preachers gathered money for the poor widows, while in the modern church poor widows must gather money for the preachers” — e-Editor]

The Message of Haggai

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Restoration Review

For all those words which were written long ago are meant to teach us today; that when we read in the scriptures of the endurance of men and of all the help that God gave them in those days, we may be encouraged to go on hoping in our own time. (Rom. 15:4 Phillips).

This statement of the apostle indicates that the ancient prophets have a message for us in these days. That which they spoke orally to their contemporaries has been written down “to teach us today.” This implied that human nature and human problems do not change. Although presented in varied aspects and in different garb they remain basically the same.

For we are the same our fathers have been;

We see the same sights our fathers have seen;

We drink the same stream, and view the same sun,

And run the same course our fathers have run.

They died, aye! they died, and we things that are now,

Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,

Who make in their dwelling a transient abode,

Meet the things that they met on their pilgrimage road.

It is a consideration of this fact which prompts me to write about Haggai. He was a prophet in an arrested restoration. It was not his task to get the people to return to Palestine. His was the job of getting them to return to work. Those who had enlisted to restore the temple of God had become either discouraged or complacent. Their great original objective was lost. They had begun to concentrate on material gain and luxurious living. Excuses were being made to justify their indifference. They needed to be awakened, aroused and alerted.

1. The Background

In conformity with the dire predictions made by earlier prophets, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, thrice marched against Jerusalem, destined to destruction as a divine recompense for greed and idolatry. In the year B.C. 606 he carried away as captives many of the royal seed; in 598 B.C. he besieged the city, took the king prisoner, despoiled the temple and palace of their treasurers, and transported the princes, craftsmen and artisans to Babylon. “None remained, except the poorest people of the land.” Zedekiah, who was left to rule, foolishly revolted, and the foreign monarch again laid siege to the city. The walls were finally breached, and in B.C. 586, Nebuzaradan, chief of staff among the Chaldean forces, set fire to the city, leaving it a mass of rubble and smoking ruins. “And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard, broke down the walls around Jerusalem.”

The people of Judah were dispersed throughout Chaldea in small colonies. Their national hopes were kept alive by Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, who promised they would be repatriated if they repented and turned to God with undivided hearts. Long before the birth of Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, it had been prophesied by Isaiah, who even named him, that he would be God’s shepherd to fulfill his purpose, “Saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built,’ and of the temple, ‘Your

foundation shall be laid.” Accordingly, as the seventy years of exile drew near the close, Cyrus overthrew Babylon, and in B.C. 536, “the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom and put it in writing.” The effect of this was to free all of the exiles who desired to return for the express purpose of rebuilding the house of the Lord. They were granted the right of taking gold, silver, goods, beasts and costly wares. The king personally restored 5,469 vessels of gold and silver which had been carried from the temple and placed in the idolatrous shrines in Babylon.

About 50,000 captives chose to constitute the remnant to return to the land of Judah. They were under the leadership of Joshua, a priest of the family of Aaron; and of Zerubbabel, a prince of the house of David. The latter carried a commission as governor of the land. It is highly probable that two young men, Haggai and Zechariah, were in the company. The first act of the people was to build the altar and offer upon it daily burnt offerings unto God. Inspired by this, they contributed generously to a fund for masons and carpenters, and created a stockpile of food, oil and wine, to use as foreign exchange in order to obtain of the Tyrians and Sidonians, cedar trees from the mountains of Lebanon.

In B.C. 534, they laid the foundation for the new temple, an event which was celebrated with pomp and ceremony. The people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, but the aged men who had seen the original temple wept with a loud voice, “so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the weeping.”

2. The Prophet

It is fourteen years after the temple foundation was laid down when we are introduced to Haggai. We know little about him except that he was God’s messenger to “restore the

restoration” and revive the flagging zeal of the people. During the interval that elapsed the work had ceased. The people lost heart because of the hardships they endured. Their fields had to be cleared of stones and briars. Jungle growth had become an almost impenetrable thicket where their houses once stood. Their original substance was becoming exhausted. Worst of all, they were continuously harassed by the semi-barbarous Samaritans who lived to the north of them. To add insult to injury, these foes addressed a letter to Smerdis, a successor to Cyrus, on the Persian throne, insinuating that the purpose of the Jews was to rebuild Jerusalem as to fortress, to be used in fomenting a revolt. The result was that Smerdis, a usurper, issued an interdict against continuance of the work.

The date of the prophetic work of Haggai is not in doubt. Ezra declares that the building of the temple “ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.” Haggai tells us it was on the first day of the sixth month of that year that the word of the Lord came to him. That would be in B.C. 520, the second year of Darius Hystaspes. The interdict had not been lifted yet, when Haggai and Zechariah urged the people to resume their effort. Ezra records that Zerubbabel and Joshua “arose and began to rebuild the house of God which is in Jerusalem; and with them were the prophets of God helping them.”

Again the enemies came to Jerusalem and in an insolent manner asked the laborers by whose authority they prosecuted their work. When they cited the original edict of Cyrus, a letter was dispatched to Darius Hystaspes, asking that a search be made of the royal archives to determine if this was factual. In the royal library at Ecbatana, a scroll was found containing the original decree, and Darius declared that not only must the work not be hindered, but the cost of construction was to be paid from the royal revenue derived from tribute payments.

3. The Message

The revelation by Haggai is very brief. It consists of five pronouncements. These cover two small chapters. The time required to deliver them was four months, between the first day of the sixth month and the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, in B.C. 620. It should not be forgotten that the exhortation to resume building was given prior to repeal of the interdict of Smerdis. We suggest that the concerned student read carefully the abbreviated statements comprising this small book. Haggai enunciates clearly the principles on which God deals with men and directs their affairs. The careful researchist will arrive at the following conclusions:

1. God demands first place in our thoughts and lives. To relegate him to a secondary position is to cut ourselves off from our own source of blessing. Man is required to develop a proper sense of values.

2. The pleasure and glory of God must take precedence over our own desires and ambitions, otherwise all of our labors will be unfruitful and ineffective.

3. There is nothing to fear so long as the Spirit of God abides among a people. This is not only the greatest incentive to labor but provides unquestionable security and protection.

4. All silver and gold belong to the Lord and we are but stewards dispensing his possessions left in trust with us. To use these upon self and secure personal luxury at the expense of his cause is to prove lax and unworthy.

5. Men are required to take personal stock of their lives in the light of what transpires, and to adjust their behavior accordingly. Haggai repeats the admonition, "Consider how you have fared."

The word of the Lord came to Haggai at an opportune

time. The first day of the sixth month was the feast of the new moon. This was the occasion for a special sacrifice and a feast within the sacred precincts of the temple. The people must have assembled amidst the piles of hewn stones, the heaps of lumber, and the stacked beams.

For almost fourteen years these had borne witness to the unfinished task. They gave mute testimony of the fear and forgetfulness, the fright and failure of the ransomed ones. In such a scene the prophet can no longer contain himself. He begins with the utterance, "The people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord." He struck directly at the heart of their condition. "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins?"

They had the time, talent and treasure to devote to erection of their own dwellings, and these were houses of luxury. God had given them warnings which went unheeded. They planted much seed and harvested but little grain; they ate but their hunger was never assuaged; they drank but were never filled; they clothed themselves but were not warmed; inflationary prices reduced the purchasing power of their incomes until it was as if they earned wages to put them into a bag with holes. These things they credited to bad luck, poor seasons, and the robbery of their marauding neighbors. They were due to learn a lesson. "You have looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? says the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while you busy yourself with your own house."

The people were asked to consider how they fared prior to starting the foundation of the temple. They were asked to contrast their meager fare with the abundance which would be theirs when they committed themselves without reserve to restoration of the house and worship of God. It was declared, "From this day on I will bless you."

Our fathers also began a great work of restoration. Men of honor in the various segments of Protestantism, dissatisfied with the partisan spirit which held them aloof from one another by the creation of “brotherhoods” based upon creedal affirmations and opinions, joined their forces to return from spiritual Babylon, or confusion, to restore the ancient order. It was their goal to destroy sectarianism by the uniting of the Christians in all sects through a restoration of the primitive ekklesia, or fellowship, based upon faith in Jesus as God’s Son and the Messiah.

Now that work has bogged down. For decades, the heirs of this noble movement have been content to build their own houses, or factions, separating and segregating brethren in total disregard of the prayer of Jesus, and with little effort expended upon the task of constructing the house of God. Thorns of hatred and thickets of entangled creedal opinions have grown up to obscure the spiritual site. Some, mistaking the foundation for the house, have concluded that Campbell, Stone and Scott, completely restored Jerusalem, and left nothing for us to do, except to mark off a segment of the ruins and boldly challenge all intruders and interlopers upon our respective domains.

But the task of restoration belongs to each generation. We need to be reminded in the spirit of Haggai, that God can only bless us if we labor at the effort. “Take courage, all you people of the land, says the Lord; work, for I am with you, says the Lord of hosts.” We should not be deterred by the accusations and attacks of our neighbors, or by the lethargy and indifference of our brethren. Nor should we succumb to the temptation of ease and luxury, to “dwell in wainscoted houses while the house of God lies in ruins.” It is only by the sacrifice of the concerned ones that the house of God will be constructed so that he can have pleasure in it and appear in his glory. We need once more to recapture the spirit of Haggai, prophet of the return—to *work!*

Agape: Foundation of Christian Fellowship

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Restoration Review

“The Greeks had a word for it.” This statement which has become proverbial indicates the wealth invested in the original vocabulary of the Greeks. Language is a medium of exchange and words are its currency. Since words are the symbols of ideas it is obvious that those who possess the richest deposit of words will be best adapted to the transmission of thought. The Greeks affect our culture today not alone because they had great ideas and ideals. They also had the vehicles by which to transport them to the realm of reality and to afford them to succeeding generations. Of all the languages adopted and adapted by mankind since God confused human tongues none other can compare with the Hellenistic in its fluency and fluidity.

An outstanding feature of the Greek language was its ability to indicate subtle shades of difference in meaning. Whereas other languages might be staid and conventional, the Greek was living and vibrant. In descriptive power it was unexcelled. Even today, in spite of our own acquisition of words from many sources we find it difficult sometimes to capture the essence of a Greek word and translate it into our own tongue.

It is admitted that ideas are stimulated by words even as words are the outward expression of ideas, but where an idea never enters the human mind by rational processes, no word can be coined or adopted to express it. Such an idea may exist in the mind of God and never be attained to by man because the infinite intelligence is unlimited whereas the human intelligence is restricted. The ways of God and the thoughts of God are not the ways and thoughts of men. They are higher than these are as the heavens are higher than the earth. An infinite thought requires revelation in order to be placed upon a plane accessible to human understanding. By sheer exercise of reason the Greek philosophers pierced the veil of understanding and grasped the significance of the universe in which men dwell. Things tangible and intangible yielded up their secrets before the prying questions of men like Socrates and the investigative research of those like Aristotle. But there was one area in which their brilliant intellects failed to grasp the infinite and their eloquence proved to be wholly inadequate of expression.

“Love is of God.” This statement in 1 John 4:7 accepted so nonchalantly by those of us who live this side of the cross was clearly beyond the grasp of the ancients. Certainly they knew much about love and a great deal about God, but the relationship between the two was never understood until it was revealed. That revelation came not in mere words as a system of doctrine for this love cannot be wholly confined to speech. “Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.” “God is love.” God is a person. If God is love then love is personal. This is different than saying that a person is love, for many persons are not loving or lovable. God is love but love is not God.

Because love is personal the highest manifestation of love is in the form of a person. “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world” (1 John 4:9). We must not overlook the significance of the term “love *was made* manifest.” It is not merely that love, in the abstract, was manifested to us, or toward us. It was made

manifest among us. It became embodied, personal and visible. It could be heard, seen with the eyes and handled with the hands.

The Greeks personified many of their qualities, temperaments and virtues. They had their “Three Fates”—Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. They had their “Three Graces”—Aglaia, Euphrosyne and Thalia. But they perceived of their gods and goddesses as merely presiding over certain aspects of existence. Hera was the goddess *of* marriage; Aphrodite was the goddess *of* love. Their sculptors, drawing upon imagination, sought to reproduce in stone an image of the words they had developed. It remained for the living God to make manifest in the flesh that quality which is said to be greater than faith or hope. “The Word was made flesh and lived among us.” It is no wonder the classical writers had no word for this love because they had no idea of it. It was a new dimension in human understanding. It was a love that passed, or surpassed, human knowledge.

It is not at all a waste of time to discuss the terms for love in use among the Greeks and to differentiate between the attributes to which they gave vocal expression. The first we may mention is *philia*, or its verb form *phileo*. This had to do with a tender affection, a deep reverence or respect. It represents a longing based upon emotion and growing out of a need to recognize and be recognized. It is the term for the relationship among friends, for those who are close and intimate. *Phileo* is three times rendered “kiss” and every time in connection with the kiss of betrayal bestowed by Judas upon Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 22:47).

This is the word used by the disciples with reference to the relation of Jesus to Lazarus. “Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick” (John 11:3). It is also the word used by the Jews at the tomb of Lazarus when Jesus wept. “Behold, how he loved him.” It is the word employed for those who “love to pray standing in the synagogues” (Matt. 6:5); for those who “love greetings in the

markets” (Luke 20:46); and who “love the prominent seats at the feasts” (Matt. 23:6). It is obvious that men have deep yearnings for other things than friendship, or is this a longing for the friendship of the world?

Those who are interested in word derivation and construction find this one a fruitful source of interest because of its combinations. The most familiar, of course, is in the word *philadelphia*, brotherly love, where it is combined with *adelphos*, the word for brother. There is the word *philarguros*, in which it is combined with *arguros*, silver. This word is rendered “love of money” in 1 Timothy 6:10. Another interesting combination is with *agathos*, good, so that *philagathos* is translated “a lover of good” in Titus 1:8. We must not forget another interesting combination in *philautos*, translated “lovers of their own selves” in 2 Timothy 3:2.

THE GREEK “EROS”

Another word familiar to the Greeks was *eros*. In the classics this was the term employed to designate the amorous relations between the sexes. It became the term to express the passionate feeling demonstrated in sensuality and has come down to us in the word *erotic*, which is defined, “Of, relating to, or treating of sexual love, amatory.” This word is never used in the new covenant scriptures in any of its forms, a fact about which Archbishop Trench, in his “Synonyms of the New Testament” comments as follows: “Their absence is significant. It is in part no doubt to be explained from the fact that, by the corrupt use of the word, they had become so steeped in sensual passion, carried such an atmosphere of unholiness about them, that the truth of God abstained from the defiling contact with them, yea, devised a new word rather than betake itself of one of these.”

The new word to which Trench alludes is *agape* but it is

possible that his conclusion with regard to the motive involved in avoidance of the use of *eros* is not wholly justifiable in light of the real facts. Testimony commonly quoted in support of the viewpoint is generally traceable back to Trench's thesis, and is derivative and dependent, rather than original. This only serves to show how popular and widespread was the influence of the book on synonyms which was first published at Cambridge in 1854. The religious scholarship of the world is always in debt to one who does such monumental research. Frequently, however, it is accepted as the final word on a subject and tends to stifle and discourage further investigation.

In our own day a great deal of study has been done on the relationship of *eros* and *agape* and the contrast between the two concepts which they represent. This renewed concern has been intensified by publication of a book which is considered to be one of the most important theological works of the twentieth century, *Agape and Eros*, by Anders Nygren. The author was ordained to the ministry of the Church of Sweden at the age of twenty-one and is now Bishop of Lund. As a result of his thesis there has been a stimulation of thought with reference to love within the Christian framework. This is especially true with the Scandinavian school of thought represented by such scholars as Anton Fridrichsen, Nils Johanson, Erik Sjoberg, et. al.

It is not essential to our presentation that we critically examine the difference between *eros* and *agape*. Enough works devoted to this theme are now available to the English reader that we could contribute nothing new or original. Our interest is not primarily in a word never used by the Holy Spirit but in one employed repeatedly by the divine agent of revelation. Suffice it to say, then, that *eros* is a love evoked or motivated by the beauty and worth of its object. *Agape* is spontaneous and unmotivated. *Eros* recognizes the value in its object and loves it; *agape* loves its object and creates the value within it. It has been pointed out by Nygren that *eros* represents an upward movement. It is man's way to God. *Agape* bends down and

stoops to share our human lot. It is God's way to man.

DEFINITION OF AGAPE

It seems to me that in our struggle for efficiency in communication we frequently become victims of our own definitive process. We are so concerned to have an agreed upon standard for the meaning of our word symbols that we allow the dictionary to become our jailer as well as our judge. It serves not only to refine but also to confine our thinking. It is a false assumption that every great ideal is fully definable in human terms. Just as there are some things which cannot be purchased for money, our medium of exchange in the economic realm, so there are some things that cannot be secured by words, the medium of exchange in the rational domain. One such concept is *agape*. My own definition is admittedly feeble and weak. My only comfort lies in the fact that a definition provided by any other would also be inadequate.

Agape is "the energetic and beneficent good will which stops at nothing to serve the good of the beloved object." I have frequently broken this down into its components in an endeavor to distill from it everything that is extraneous and redundant. As it now stands it represents my own frail and feeble mental approach to a concept so vast that it is beyond complete description or definition. I ask your own analytical scrutiny of it that you may see how I view the word *agape* and why I say that it is the very foundation of all *koinonia*, fellowship, in God and with man. To the extent that we understand the implications of *agape* our fellowship is strengthened and abounds. To the degree that we do not grasp it our fellowship must languish.

First, observe the word "will." Other words for love represent an act of affection, but *agape* is an act of achievement in the individual through the Spirit. It is not the expression of an emotion but the adoption of a principle by which to live. As

respects *agape* one does not fall in love, he deliberately stoops to share. There is a difference between falling when you cannot help it and bending down purposely to help another. This accounts for the fact that love can be commanded. "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (John 15:17). The emotions cannot be commanded and an overt demonstration of them under compulsion would be mere pretense or hypocrisy. But that which is an act of will is subject to command.

By the same token the degree or intensity of that which results from exercise of will can be regulated by that will. Thus a command can be issued to increase the demonstration of love. "But as touching brotherly love (*philadelphia*) ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love (*agapao*) one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more" (1 Thess. 4:9-10). Thus, the apostle can write, "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you the less I be loved" (2 Cor. 12:15).

Next, observe that *agape* is always and unvaryingly *good* will. In that wonderful description of its attributes and characteristics given by the apostle in 1 Corinthians 13, he specifically says, "It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails" (J. B. Phillips translation). It is not selfish or egocentric. It does not seek for revenge or justification because its mere possession is its own justification. Like wisdom, it is justified by its own fruit or offspring.

It is *beneficent* good will. For this reason it can be extended even to one's enemies. It differs from *philia* which is affection for the pleasing, and *eros* which is passion for the beautiful and attractive. *Agape* is the ability to love those whom you cannot like. We like those of the same temperament, disposition and nature as ourselves, that is, we like those who are like ourselves.

But the spirit of *agape* enables us to exert a beneficent goodwill, born of real concern, toward those who are unlike us and even antagonistic toward us. “God is *agape*,” Therefore, God could love the world, and so love it as to give his Son. “But Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, and that is God’s own proof of his love (*agape*) toward us” (Romans 5:8). It was “when we were God’s enemies we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son” (verse 10).

Just as God proved his *agape* by what he did for us while we were his enemies so we prove that we are his children in the same fashion. “But you must love (*agapao*) your enemies and do good; and lend without expecting any return; and you will have a rich reward: you will be sons of the Most High, because he himself is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate” (Luke 6:35-36). To the extent that we stop and question what we will get out of it our actions are motivated by *eros*. *Agape* is spontaneous and unmotivated. The love which is bestowed in order to receive response is prompted more by the need of the giver than that of the receiver. It is not a benefaction but an investment.

We have defined *agape* as being energetic as well as beneficent. This is important to a grasp of the nature of this love. “Energy” is a combined form of the Greek *en*, in, and *ergon*, work. It relates to that force which operates in and through a thing because it is inherent in it. *Agape* is not a force acted upon but a power which acts upon. It is creative while self-effacing. In a happy translation of 1 Corinthians 13:4, J. B. Phillips has caught this thought. “The love of which I speak is slow to lose patience—it looks for a way of being constructive. It is not possessive; it is neither anxious to impress nor does it cherish inflated ideas of its own importance.” *Agape* is creative. It is a fruit of the Spirit and the Spirit is what brought order out of chaos in the primeval world. The Spirit performs the same function relative to the problems of the new creation.

AGAPE IN EPHESIANS

The relationship of *agape* to the fellowship can best be understood by an examination of its use in the letter to the Ephesians, that great epistle of togetherness. In Ephesians 1:5-6 it is affirmed that “He destined us in love (*agape*) to be his sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will.” Fellowship is based upon sonship, fraternity is based upon paternity. This is not a mere afterthought of God. It is our destiny because it was his purpose and his will. God’s purpose is a unity plan and it is universal in scope. “For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (1:9-10).

This plan began by a magnificent work of grace in which man was reconciled unto God. Grace is extended not to the worthy but to the unworthy. It is always undeserved kindness. In this instance it was bestowed upon those who were sons of disobedience and children of wrath. It was those destined to punishment whom God destined to be his sons. In order to achieve this through Jesus Christ it was necessary that these be made alive together with Christ. This transformation which resulted in a new creation was an outgrowth of *agape*. “But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love (*agape*) with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:5-6).

Ponder well the threefold use of the word “with” in this one sentence. The great *agape* of God made us alive together with Christ, raised us up together with him, made us sit together with him. Here is divine *agape* functioning in three ways—resurrection, elevation and participation— with Christ Jesus. The plan to unite all things in him actually began by uniting

things in heaven and things on earth. Alienation gave way to adoption, antagonism to acceptance.

The next step in the plan was to bring together those forces on earth which God recognized as existing in a state of segregation by reason of the barriers which had been erected between them. The entire world of mankind was divided into two classes by a fleshly rite. They constituted the circumcision and the uncircumcision. So great was the gulf between them that the former were regarded as those who were near while others were spoken of as those who were far off. Unless *agape* could resolve the problems of separation in this case it must ultimately suffer defeat. If it could bring these two divergent segments together it would demonstrate a power sufficient to batter down all obstacles to unity in all ages.

The motivating factor for oneness in Ephesus was the *agape* of Christ which was expressed by giving, offering and sacrifice. "And walk in love (agape) as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (5:2). The Cross of Calvary represents the ultimate in *agape*. It is the apex of love, the peak which towers above all others on the horizon of the heart. Even those who were far off could see it and come to it. In our western mountains there is a range which bears the name of Sangre de Cristo— blood of Christ. The setting sun turns the snow-capped peaks to crimson and makes it appear that they are splotted with blood. The Spanish padres accompanying the explorers designated these jagged heights with a significant title. We are reminded of the statement in Ephesians 2:13, "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ."

Our peace is not a precept or a program, but a person. In him all dividing walls are dissolved, all hostility is halted. Unity is his creation and not an achievement of men. Men may keep or guard it but they cannot make it. The divine purpose is opposed to division and disunity. God is not the author of confusion but

of peace. Wherever there are two divergent elements or factions it is the will of God that they merge into one. This was demonstrated from the very outset of Christianity. It was shown to be the ideal and the aim of God to make “one new man in place of two.” This purpose has never been altered. “For he is our peace who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace.”

Note the expression “*so* making peace.” It shows us the method of working under the “plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him.” That method did not ignore the presence of the dividing wall of hostility. It did not pretend that the wall was imaginary or inconsequential. Instead it recognized that the wall was very real. But it did not demand that one group go around or climb over the wall and thus unite with the other on their grounds. It did not so much move the people as it removed the wall. The wall of hostility was broken down and when it was removed the people were together and the hostility was at an end.

Instead of fusing the two together he infused them both into himself. He instigated a fusion by eliminating confusion. He recovered for both of them a sense of their destiny, he restored to them a recognition of their real purpose. Love was not limited to the group on one side or the other of the dividing wall. Instead it made the wall which was once opaque become transparent and *agape* created a value in its object. Its object was shown to be mankind and not a particular kind of man. The cross which was a magnet for the good and honest hearts became a battering ram for the wall. The wall was broken down as hearts were broken up. Jews and Gentiles were not forced to submit to the power of God but to surrender to the love of God. The power was exerted against the dividing wall, the love permeated the hearts of the separated ones. He reconciled both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing hostility to an end (2:16).

We can learn much from God's method which will enable us to deal with our own tragic division in this generation. Jesus came to batter down walls, we have existed to build walls and claim to do so in his name and by his authority. He came to unite men, we have used his message to divide them. Jesus came to a divided world composed of hostile and warring forces. How did he proceed in order to weld them into one body? The answer is very simple. "And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near" (Eph. 2:17). He came and preached! This is the method prescribed by *agape*! Conditions are to be alleviated by proclamation. It is the divine provision for overcoming division!

But you may argue that it is preaching which has caused our divided state. That is true but we must not overlook the difference in content between our messages and that of Jesus. He preached peace to create one body, we have preached the one body he created to pieces. We have been more concerned with building up walls than with building up saints. We have lost "the cross purpose" in life and have come to be at cross purposes with each other. Instead of bringing hostility to an end we have fed the flames. We have consumed one another instead of confirming one another in the faith. We will never remove our modern walls until we see and love as brethren those who are on both sides of them.

Jesus preached the same thing to those on both sides of the wall— peace! So long as there is schism in the fabric of brotherhood we are all in schism. In our currently divided state there is no such thing as one party being the loyal church or the faithful church. Those who sit down in complacency and comfort, regarding themselves as the chosen people in the exclusion of the rest of the scattered flock only exhibit their sectarianism and party spirit. Their isolation is a testimony to their factional outlook, their insulation is a witness to their ignorance and perversity.

But we will never better our state until someone arises who regards all of God's children as his brethren, not because they all see alike but because they all have the same Father. When someone under compulsion of a vision which makes no provision for division in the family of God begins to preach peace to those on all sides of our sectarian barriers there is hope of a brighter day. The message of Jesus was peace, and so long as we are separated and segregated from each other that is the needed word. Jesus grew up in a Jewish home and worshiped in a Jewish synagogue, but he knew nothing of Jewish provincial prejudice. He loved those who were far off as he did those who were near. Proximity was not the test of his love. No one could be so far that he overlooked him, no one so close that he looked over him.

There is a thrilling climax to that portion of the sacred scripture we are reviewing. It demonstrates that there is no ground for morbid pessimism regarding the walls of hostility in our day. We do not need to look upon division as incurable nor accept it as inevitable. With the preaching of peace walls will crumble and barriers break down. Things will no longer be as they were. Those who were strangers will become fellow-laborers. They will be yokefellows because they are yoked to Christ. This was the glorious hope held out by the apostle who declares of the once-separated forces, "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." What power there is in *agape* to transform a stranger into a citizen or a sojourner into a member of the family.

No one would have dared to dream that the day would come when the Gentiles would be "fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6). This was the mystery of the ages but now that it has been revealed we should no longer regard it as mysterious. The apostle says that "we should have boldness and confidence of access through our faith in him (Christ)." Our power of

comprehension, enabling us to probe the four dimensions of the spiritual life and to be filled with the fulness of God is dependent upon our foundation of *agape*. Thus, we not only enter into fellowship with God and Christ and with each other by *agape*, but we mature into that character which is saintly by the same means. Our increasing maturity brings a deepening experience of the nature and value of the *koinonia*.

The apostle prayed for the congregation at Ephesus, “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love (*agape*), may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love (*agape*) of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God.”

It should be remarked that this great passage begins with the indwelling Spirit and the power conveyed by his presence in the believer. There is no indication that the Spirit is intended to alleviate our physical ills or delay dissolution of the man that is of the earth. Indeed it is specifically said that “though the outward man perish yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” There is a daily benefit for the believer derived from the Spirit according to the riches of the glory of God. Making room for the Spirit enables the Spirit to create in us that atmosphere in which Christ Jesus dwells by faith.

It is also through the Spirit that we are rooted and grounded in *agape*. The term “rooted” considers the Christian life from the standpoint of a tree; the term “grounded” from that of a building or structure. The roots are not seen but they act as braces to hold the tree steady that it be not destroyed by storm and wind. Thus it is with *agape*. Unseen though it may be we can see its effect in character that is unshaken by temptation and steadfastness that endures despite persecution. There is

nothing shallow or superficial about *agape*. It grasps the soil of faith and anchors us in Christ Jesus. It puts down its tendrils and entwines itself about hope that never disappoints.

The New English Bible renders the passage, “With deep roots and firm foundations, may you be strong to grasp, with all God’s people, what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ.” Any other foundation is one of sand. It is useless to attempt to build permanently without first digging down to lay the foundation in *agape*. It can be known though it is beyond knowledge. This simply means that as we grasp it greater vistas are opened unto us. Regardless of how much we learn about love there is infinitely more to learn. It is because of this inexhaustible supply that we can continue to grow in love without ever outgrowing it. Those who have experienced *agape* share in the riches of Christ and in the rich fellowship with each other.

It is not at all surprising that the apostle urges us in chapter 4:1-3 to put *agape* to work in the complex field of human relationships. The saints are urged to walk worthy of the calling to which they were called. Phillips translates it, “Accept life with humility and patience, making allowance for each other because you love (agapao) each other. Make it your aim to be at one with the Spirit and you will inevitably be at peace with one another.” This implies that peace with one another is conditioned upon oneness with the Spirit. Harmony is not the same as conformity. There will always be diversity but there need not be disunity. If we have *agape* for one another we will make allowances. Love takes into consideration every circumstance. It gives the other person the benefit of the doubt and never doubts the benefit of doing so. The apostle says in 1 Corinthians 13:5, “Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy.”

Anton Fridrichsen writes,

What is agape in the New Testament? Love is unity in the community and with the community. According to the New Testament thought that is unity with Christ. When in Colossians 3:14 love is called ‘the bond of perfectness’ that means it is that which constitutes unity in the church (that is, perfectness). As the church is the Spirit’s creation and work, love is the Spirit’s first and most important fruit. There can be no real fellowship without love. *Agape* is the light in which we must walk as God is that light, if we are to have fellowship one with another (1 John 1:7). We are not required to have the knowledge that God possesses to be in fellowship with Him or others, but we are required to have His *agape* if we are to be regarded as “children of the Most High.”

If we attempt to produce unity by human creeds, confessions and concordats, we shall fail. It cannot be secured by dogma, decree or document. The unity of the Spirit is a gift of the Spirit to those who have the fruits of the Spirit and the first one of those fruits mentioned is *agape* (Gal. 5:23). While we try to bring about unity by conformity and base it upon affiliation with those whom we like we are sowing the seed of division. It is only when we love brethren whom we cannot like, those whose speech and actions grate upon our ears and nerves that we are walking in the footsteps of Jesus. It is not so much that we must like those with whom we sit together physically as that we love those with whom we are knit together spiritually. Paul prays for some “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love” (*agape*). There is a difference between being tied together and being knit together. In the first, personal identity is preserved; in the second, it is interwoven and lost. The first is the result of *eros*, the second of *agape*.

We cannot afford to overlook the implication of the word love in two more passages in Ephesians, chapter four. After mentioning the bestowal of grace upon each according to the measure of the gift of Christ, the apostle affirms three things about Jesus. He ascended on high, he led a multitude of captives

with him, and he bestowed gifts upon men. In clarification of this last statement he shows that these gifts to the people of God were special functionaries adapted to the developing of the saints. It was never the purpose of God that the body should grow through being ministered unto, but by ministering. It is as each part performs its work that the body moves toward maturity. Yet it is obvious that to be able to do this the members must be trained. For this reason Jesus has provided special functionaries or gifts.

“And his gifts were that some should be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, teaching pastors.” The purpose of these special servants is specified as follows: “With a view to training or adapting the saints to carry on the work of service unto the building up of the body of Christ.” The evangelists and elders are to train the saints to minister. The community of God is an army. As enlistees, its members require training to carry on the warfare. They must be brought to and kept in combat readiness.

Verse 15 affirms that these must speak the truth in love (*agape*), and grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. As I see it, the apostle does not here refer to our manner of expression when we speak. He is not saying we should be gentle and considerate in our choice and usage of words. All that is true, of course, and we should avoid rudeness and harshness. But to “speak the truth in *agape*” means to be constructive, helpful and upbuilding. *Agape* seeks the good of its object and we need to be certain that we have the proper goal and motive in our hearts. This will assist us toward maturity in all of the facets of Christian conduct.

Verse 16 points out that edification of the body is rooted in *agape*. Such edification results when the entire body is fitly joined together and the divine adhesive is love. When the members of the body effectively work together instead of against each other, when every joint supplies that which it is designed to

supply and all are related through Christ Jesus, the result can be nothing but spiritual edification. All hope of spiritual strength lies in the implementation of love. With love our consecration grows, without it disintegration comes. Love brings increase and satisfaction, its absence produces decrease and petrification.

HEALING WOUNDS WITH AGAPE

Not only is *agape* the foundation upon which unity is predicated initially, but it is the healing balm which closes wounds and removes scars when schism comes. Just as a study of *agape* in Ephesians reveals that it is the basis of God's plan for unity, so a study of First Corinthians demonstrates that it is the divine program for restoring peace to a disrupted church. We are sorry that a community of saints became so involved in the party spirit as did the one at Corinth but we are fortunate to have the prescription for such an aggravated condition.

The congregation was divided over two things: the men who had special gifts, and the special gifts which men had. In the first instance they exalted certain men; in the second they exalted certain gifts. Paul learned of the dissension from members of the family of Chloe who had come to Ephesus. They told him that the fabric of peace had been rent by the party cries of the brethren. As Paul phrased it, "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ."

The state of affairs was so bad that Paul actually wrote, "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name." So obnoxious was the party spirit to the apostle that he deplored any attempt to build a following around himself. In 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 he attributes the factional attitude to two things— childishness and carnality. In view of their status he could not address them as spiritual men but as babes. They were

not able to digest meat and had to be fed with milk. Just as the physical body is sick when the muscles will not coordinate, so the spiritual body is ill when the members do not act in harmony. The apostle declares that those are carnal and walk as ordinary men who indulge in envy, strife and division.

To call them back to a proper perspective, the apostle insists upon a correct evaluation of men. Paul and Apollos were merely servants and agents of reconciliation. They were enabled to serve only as God allotted his grace to them. One planted, the other watered, but both were helpless to produce and sustain an increase. This was wholly within the domain of God. He who plants and he who waters are one and that which is planted and watered by them should be one. The only foundation that can be laid is Jesus Christ. No preacher, teacher, apostle, or prophet, can build men upon himself. Only one who was crucified for us deserves our spiritual homage and loyalty. Since all of us must be built upon that one foundation there can be no room for division. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

In a burst of inclusiveness Paul exhorts, "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours." It is ridiculous for one to say "I belong to Paul"; another to say, "I belong to Apollos"; and a third to say, "I belong to Cephas"; when all these belong to all the brethren. No one can exclusively possess that which belongs to all others by equal right. It is foolish indeed to be alone possessed by one who is himself possessed by all. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and you are Christ's; and Christ is God's." If we are Christ's then everything that belongs to Christ is ours, and we belong to everyone who belongs to Him.

It is noteworthy that in dealing with the party spirit occasioned by exaltation of the leaders, the apostle does not in any sense minimize the importance of men. He only exalts the

Lord Jesus Christ. Paul and Apollos were ministers by whom they believed; they were laborers together with God. Each was to receive his own reward according to his own labor. But each could build only on one foundation for no man could lay another foundation than Jesus Christ. No man could exalt himself because of his special talents or abilities for all of these had been given by another. It is the bestower of gifts not the recipient who deserves the honor. “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it why dost thou glory?”

Just as Paul corrected the situation related to men who had special gifts, not by derogation of the men but by exaltations of the perfect man; so he corrects the situation created by the special gifts men have, not by minimizing the gifts but by exaltation of the only perfect gift. The treatise on spiritual gifts contained in chapter 12, 13, and 14, is one of the most interesting and thrilling in the new covenant scriptures. There were nine spiritual gifts and of their purpose and function the apostle would not have the brethren to be ignorant. The Corinthians were not lacking in any spiritual gift (1 Cor. 1:7) and he did not write to them as he did to the Romans, “I long to see you that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift.”

But pride and selfishness entered into the exercise of the gifts at Corinth. When the congregation came together in one place those who had the gift of tongues and who were blessed with the power of utterance sought to usurp the time even to the exclusion of those who possessed the gift of prophetic utterance. The apostle begins his treatise on the theme of unity in diversity. In this he incidentally affirms the unity of the Godhood. “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.”

It is obvious that if all the gifts, service and working,

originated with the same source and if that source is not antagonistic to itself, then the gifts should not be employed to create dissension. So it is affirmed, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit to the common good." It is further asserted, "All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." The human body is introduced as an illustration. The various members have different functions but these are not to oppose each other. Their efforts are coordinated and as each functions with due respect for all of the others in the body is made more powerful. No member can detach himself from the body by derogating his own function, no member can dispossess another who possesses a different ability. The grand climax of this argument is reached in the statement, "But God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body."

Note well the implication of these words, "God has so adjusted . . . that there be no discord." When discord exists something is out of adjustment. When everything is properly adjusted there will be no discord. But what means has been divinely provided to readjust relationships when they go askew? Is the body doomed to disintegration when it gets out of adjustment? Not at all! There is a quality provided which is calculated to maintain harmony and to restore it. It is a divine solvent which eliminates all sources of friction and a tool which is perfectly calibrated to restore smoothness when rough places occur in the spiritual mechanism. "But earnestly desire the higher gifts. And I will show you a more excellent way."

In 1 Corinthians 13, the more excellent way is revealed to be that of *agape*. In verses 1-3, it is shown to be indispensable; in verses 4-7 it is shown to be invincible; in verses 8-10, indestructible; in verse 13, immortal.

Even though one had the *glossolalia* until he could communicate with all men in their own languages, and could

speaking the tongue which celestial beings use in divine conversation, without love he would be a noisy gong or clanging cymbal. Even the most cherished gift at Corinth when exercised in absence of love was but an empty noise. The one who had prophetic power to such an extent that he could fathom all mysteries, and solve the riddles of the universe, was nothing without love. The one who had the gift of knowledge so that he could reach out and grasp the understanding of the infinite was nothing without love. He who had the gift of supernatural faith before which hills melted and mountains fled in abject confusion, was nothing without love.

Please observe there is no Christian alternative to love. It is not a question of what we can be or have without love. It is not love or something else; it is love or nothing. There is no gain outside of love. Even if one gives away all of his possessions he had inherited or accumulated, in one burst of generosity or humanitarianism, he would gain nothing. Though he went to the stake and allowed his body to be burned because of the tenacity of his convictions, if he did so without *agape*, the act would be utterly profitless. We call death for one's conscience the supreme sacrifice, but this is not true. It is often easier to die for one's faith than to live with one's fellows. The supreme sacrifice occurs when a man gives himself unreservedly to the way of *agape*— the life of love. After that, death on the cross or at the stake is an anti-climax. It is but the capsheaf on a life of devotion.

The characteristics of *agape* demonstrate its majesty and power. "Love is patient and kind." The intolerance so often found in those who profess to be the children of God is not so much proof of love for truth as it is a manifestation of lack of love for those who seek truth. Kindness is related to grace which is merely kindness undeserved. The difference that kindness makes in the world can best be illustrated by Titus 3:3-7. The apostle paints a picture of the dire state of the world of mankind. Then he mentions, "But when the goodness and lovingkindness

of God appeared,” and goes on to show that the desert of the world blossomed like a rose.

“Love is not jealous or boastful.” To put the cause of Christ ahead of every other consideration, to see others receive the praise for what you have accomplished, and to be able to rejoice in their attainments, all of this requires *agape*. Love does not boast of its own accomplishments but constantly seeks for that in others which it may commend. It is not given to flattery but employs compliments freely. One compliments another for the good of the other; he flatters another for his own gain. Love always seeks the good of the other. It gains by giving, it saves by losing, it finds itself in sharing what it has. To be able to place a correct valuation on the worth of one’s own efforts is indeed a noble trait.

“Love is not arrogant or rude.” Arrogance signifies the disposition to arrogate to self and to demand homage because of station, rank or position, either real or imagined. There is a difference between arrogance and presumption. In the first, a person esteems himself better than others; in the second he strives to lift himself to the level of those above him. Thus, the first relates to those who deem themselves superior, the other to those who count themselves inferior. Because the cross of Jesus makes us all equal and proves there is no difference, *agape* cannot permit arrogance. Love is genteel and polite. It does not ignore the refinements of social grace but applies them to those who are in all stations in life. It bestows the more abundant care upon those who need it most. The apostle says, “On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those parts of the body which we think less honorable we invest with the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty.” To be able to bestow honor in modesty is indeed a noble trait.

“Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.” One cannot help but wonder how many of the

divisions which have beset the Christians of all ages could have been avoided and averted if the temperaments of those involved would have been under the mitigating influence of *agape*. It is a personal belief of mine that few of our actual separations were caused by the things which were credited with creating them. They have originated in the unhallowed dispositions of those who would exercise tyranny over the minds of others. The forces of stubbornness and self-will have taken their toll.

Closely allied with self-will is ill-will. The man who is least understanding and sympathetic toward others is frequently the one who demands the most deference for his whims and ideas. We speak of the irritation caused by objects which come in contact with delicate and sensitive tissues and surfaces. A tiny cinder irritates the eye. Love is not so thin-skinned. The man who possesses it is impervious to little slights and insults. He sees through the external attitude to envision a heart often starved for affection; he can even love a person who makes life difficult for him. He feels a sense of solicitude for the one who is upset by trifles and whose life is "bound in shallows and in miseries."

It is my opinion that *agape* may be indignant, although not resentful. Indignation can be a righteous feeling aroused when one sees a wrong perpetrated against himself or others. Resentment implies a personal dislike for the one who offends, while indignation is directed primarily against the act of wrongdoing. Love is not weak, compromising, or vacillating. It is strong and powerful in redress of wrong, hating sin even as it loves the sinner.

It is said that *agape* "does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right." J. B. Phillips translates this particular section thus: "Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails." This rendering is justified by the fact that the word "thinketh" as used in the expression "thinketh

no evil” is a mathematical expression. In its original, it is a word belonging to the bank or accounting house. It means to “keep account” as related to business, or to “keep score” as related to tallying the results of a game. W. E. Vine points out that it involves more than “refraining from impugning motives.” It is true that love does not imagine evil where it does not exist, but in this instance the apostle means that love does not catalog and make a list of injuries or wrongs to be dragged forth at some future date. All of us have known persons who worked together for years until one felt that his rights were infringed upon, whereupon he sought to bring forth a list of grievances which he had been compiling through the years. Love never behaves in such a fashion.

“Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” It would be easy to get the idea from a casual reading of this that love is soft, gullible, impractical and inconsistent. Far from this being the case, nothing is more firm, practical or consistent, than *agape*. Love continues to put up with things when all else has long ceased to do so. Its trust is unfading, its hope abiding. No circumstance, however dire, dims its faith that the future is in the hands of God and that in the ultimate His righteous purpose will prevail. Phillips translates with the words, “It can outlast anything.” There is no power which can withstand *agape* for “*God is agape.*” Were all to embrace love as the principle of life the powers of evil would fall before our advance like stalks of wheat before the mowing blade or scythe.

The difference between the gifts of the Spirit and this fruit of the Spirit, can be clearly seen in the fact that love is unlimited. The spiritual gifts were not unlimited in possession. They were not possessed by all and those gifts which were bestowed were parceled out. “To *one* is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to *another* the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to *another* faith by the same Spirit, to *another* gifts of healing by the one Spirit,” etc. Not all who possessed the

Spirit as a gift were endowed with a gift by the Spirit, but everyone could have *agape*. In its possession there could be no rivalry, no jealousy, no clamor for special prominence or place. The humblest member of the body, the novice in the faith, the one who was least in his own sight could equal all others in this wonderful gift.

In the second place, love was unlimited in its application. It is written that “God so loved the world,” and in doing so he made it possible for us to love all men, near and remote, those who are far off and those who are near. Even the gift of prophecy could only do good when men were in the physical presence of the speaker. “He who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.” The exercise of this gift was limited by those who came into contact with the ones possessed by the gift, or with it. “But if all prophecy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all.” Love could extend even to those who had never been seen. “For if we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?”

In the third place, love is unlimited in its influence. In Titus 3:2, the saints are exhorted “to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all men.” The reason is assigned that when they were previously “foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing their days in envy and malice, hated by men and hating one another” the kindness of God exemplified in *agape*, came and transformed them. By an exercise of this divine endowment we can change the world in which we live and become “more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”

In the fourth place, love is unlimited in endurance. The spiritual gifts were temporary in nature, but love is permanent. “Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.”

Such words as “cease” and “pass away” have no place in the vocabulary of *agape*. Love is not circumscribed by time or space. When calendars are no longer needed “and they count not time by years,” love will remain steadfast and enduring. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the love of God like the word of God, endures forever.

Again, love is unlimited in its greatness. It is one of the triad of abiding things. These are the majestic qualities which are not transitory. Faith is great, hope is great, but love is the greatest of all. Greater than tongues which, in their multiplicity, are the sign of man’s attempt to thwart God’s purpose, greater than prophecy which represents the conveyance of divine thought in human language, greater than that knowledge which is the grasp of God’s revelation— greater than all of these is *agape*— for God who is the source of language, revelation, and knowledge, is *agape*.

The festering wounds of partisanship at Corinth could be closed and healed, and the tissue of brotherhood become well and strong again through *agape*. It was the golden cord which could pierce the fabric on both sides of any rent and draw it together again. Paul recognizes the function of the gifts and he does not deprecate their use. He only says, “Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts.” Any gift is safe in the hands of him whose heart is ruled by love. The same injunction comes to the divided, suspicious and splintered church of God in our own day. “Make love your aim.” If we do this in sincerity, in the fulness of its scriptural meaning, we have nothing to fear.

When men formulate their programs, when they seek to implement the longing of their human hearts through organizations we cannot sanction and which violate our consciences, let us cultivate that spirit of *agape* which will make association possible even where endorsement is not. Thus, let us bring to bear upon every segment of our separated brethren a love that transcends all else. In spite of differences we will see a

growing sense of togetherness. We shall have a realization of a common longing, a common striving, and the hope of a common destiny. When we loose agape in our lives we also free the Spirit to work in us and through us. As instruments, weak, frail and fallible, though we may be, he can still employ us and make us fit for the Master's service.

We can never overthrow sectarianism by creating another sect filled with hate and intolerance; we cannot overcome denominationalism through exercise of the party spirit. Too long have we eaten the "apples of Sodom" which turn to acrid ashes in our mouths. Let us begin to taste that fruit of the Spirit which leaves no bitterness in our hearts. As Paul wrote to the Colossians, "Above everything else, be truly loving, for love is the golden chain of all the virtues." As the poet, John Oxenham, wrote in his "Chaos, and the Way Out"

*Then was earth made anew where'er He went,
For all men's hearts were opened to the Light,
And Christ was King, and Lord Omnipotent.
And everywhere men's hearts turned unto Him
As to the very source and fount of right,
As flowers turn to the sun, and everywhere
New Life sprang up to greet Him as He went
Dispensing grace to all men everywhere.
And His dispensed grace changed all men's hearts,
Made His will theirs, and their wills wholly His;
So that they strove no more each for himself,
But each for good of all, and all for Him;*

*Man's common aim was for the common good;
The age-old feuds were of the past,
And all mankind joined hands at last
And every man in all the whole wide world
Had room, and time, and wherewithal to live
His life at fullest full within the Law—
The Law that has no bounds or bonds for those
Who live it, for it is His Love—
The great unchanged, unchanging, and unchangeable
Law whose beginning and whose end is— Love.*

The Ground of Christian Fellowship

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Restoration Review

I am highly honored and profoundly humbled by the invitation to deliver this inaugural address at the revival of the Missouri Christian Lectureship. The theme to which I shall address myself is one of such magnitude, and my personal ability is so limited, that I can have no hope of fully developing the subject. I am among you as an explorer rather than an expounder; a researchist rather than a revealer. For this reason my approach cannot be dogmatic or arbitrary. I shall share with you those thoughts and ideas which have crystallized in my mind as a result of study and meditation. If you cannot concur in that which is offered, it will in no sense lessen my respect and regard for you as my brethren in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall approach my thesis soberly and seriously for several reasons. First, the nature of the discussion is such as to forbid any other approach. A question of such far reaching consequences should not be dealt with lightly nor in a spirit of levity. Secondly, my audience is composed of those who have enlisted under the banner of One who culminated His mission on earth by an agonizing death. We are living testimonials to the greatest sacrifice the world has ever known. We are drawn together by the power in the blood. We are not on earth to amuse one another, but to serve one another in love. The Church

of God has fallen upon serious times. We need to face up to our problems in serious fashion.

As an outline of what shall follow, I propose to discuss my subject under the following heads: (1) Definition of the term “fellowship”; (2) The nature of the fellowship in Christ Jesus; (3) Things not basic to fellowship; (4) The power which preserves fellowship.

Man is by nature a social being. He is a gregarious creature, that is, he flocks together with his kind. He is also a rational being, and because he is both social and rational, he requires some means of communication with his fellows. To transfer an idea from one mind to another demands a recognized medium of exchange. Since ideas are abstract, man has cultivated certain signs or symbols by which his ideas may be conveyed to others. These signs may be either oral or written. The former consists of certain sounds or combinations of sounds; the latter of certain transcribed characters or combinations of characters. But whether man speaks or writes, another can be said to understand him only to the degree that the symbols employed convey the same impression to the one addressed by ear or eye as occupied the attention of the speaker or writer.

The purpose of divine revelation is to convey to the hearts of men the thoughts of God. In order to accomplish this, God had to employ that means of communication which was familiar to man. Accordingly, the revelation of the divine mind was first given orally and then committed to writing. Those who were the human agents of revelation could assert, “But we received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God” (1 Cor. 2:12). It is one thing to receive a revelation, but a wholly different thing to convey it. The means employed in doing this are specified in the next verse, “Which things we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit

teacheth, interpreting spiritual things with spiritual words.”

Our task as students of divine revelation is not to secure the current meanings of the words employed by the Spirit, for words change their significance from one generation to another. Language is not dead but living; not static but active. Living forms alter with passing centuries. We dare not read *into* the sacred Scriptures what we wish; we must get *out* of them only what God placed in them. We must dedicate ourselves not only to the reading or perusal of the words spoken by the Spirit; but to discovering the meaning attached to those terms by the Spirit. It is with this objective we examine the word “fellowship.”

DEFINITION OF FELLOWSHIP

Our English word, “fellowship,” represents a combination of two forms. “Fellow” is found to be derived from the Old Norse *felagi*, comrade. This is from the root *felag*, partnership. “Ship” comes to us from the Anglo-Saxons. It is a noun-forming suffix added chiefly to nouns denoting persons. It denotes, as used in “fellowship,” a state or condition, that is, a relationship. We should note two important things about this suffix. First, it is added to nouns, and by being thus added it forms new nouns. Second, it denotes a state or condition related to the original noun which generally denotes persons. We shall refer to these points later on in our thesis.

With one exception known to me, the word “fellowship” in the King James Version is used to translate the Greek word *koinonia*, or some form of this word. This term is derived from *koinon*, the word for “common.” This word in both English and Greek has two meanings. It may signify that which belongs to the community at large, or the entire scope of life together in a society. It may also designate that which is ordinary, general, or commonplace as opposed to that which is rare and distinguished. It is in this sense it is used, for that which was not

consecrated or *kosher*, in Acts 10:14.

The word *koinonia* expresses that state or condition in which persons hold things in common. It signifies a sharing, and it is that which is shared, or held in common, which creates the fellowship. A common synonym is “partnership.” In Luke 5:7, 10, James and John were called partners (*koinonoi*) of Simon Peter. The context establishes that this relationship existed in reference to the occupation of fishing. It is not to be supposed that they were in agreement upon all matters related to life, or even to fishing. Such was not essential to their *koinonia*, or partnership. They were partners because they were united in a common enterprise. They had a mutual objective and by contract or agreement, they pursued it together, sharing in whatever gains or losses accrued.

Because man is a social being and develops his unfolding personality best in association with others, God has ordained a society of the redeemed ones to which one is added when born again of the water and of the Spirit. This society is designated the *ekklesia* in the Greek language. The word is commonly translated “church” in our tongue. This is an unfortunate translation for several valid reasons. A much better one is “community.” A community consists of those who are bound to each other by common ties. It is noteworthy that “unity” is a part of “community.” The community which Jesus planted upon the rock is a fellowship. It is the *koinonia* of the redeemed ones, those who have responded to the call, thus are “the called out.” It is the response to the call which creates the fellowship. This is what brings them together, and fellowship is togetherness elevated to spiritual status and sanctified by the blood of the slain Lamb of God.

THE NATURE OF FELLOWSHIP

There is no single English word adequate to portray the

full depth of the Greek *koinonia*. The term “fellowship” only approximates, and never exhausts the meaning. Unfortunately, it has taken on certain connotations which serve to confuse rather than to enlighten, so that the assumption that the English “fellowship” is exactly synonymous to the Greek *koinonia* does an injustice to the latter and militates against an understanding of all of its implications.

Even more to be deplored is the fact that among the heirs of the Restoration Movement there is not only a lack of understanding relative to the Greek terms, but a tragic misunderstanding of the English word. We have pointed out that the suffix “ship” is added to nouns and in the combination thus effected creates new noun forms. In spite of this, it is a common thing to hear the question, “Do you fellowship this person, or that one?” Among those with whom I am more closely allied, the question is frequently asked, “Do you fellowship the Christian Church?” Or it may be phrased, “Do you fellowship those who use instrumental music?” Regardless of how well informed such a querist may be regarding the arguments on instrumental music, he demonstrates a woeful ignorance of even the basic nature of fellowship.

We do not ask, “Do you partnership Mr. Brown?” or, “Do you companionship your wife?” or “Do you sonship your father?” On what grounds then do we justify such expressions as, “Do you fellowship such a person?” Fellowship is a state or relation. All who enter into that state or relation are in the fellowship. It is not the result accruing from the state or relationship. It is the state! It is the relationship! Whatever brings one into the relationship brings him into the fellowship. That which initiates him into the community introduces him into the *koinonia*, or fellowship.

Another tragic error derives from overlooking the fact that the suffix is added to nouns denoting persons, in such terms as we are now considering. Fellowship is not a relation to things,

but to persons. It does not signify a relation to things, either tangible or intangible, nor to ideas, views or interpretations. These may, or may not, form the basis of fellowship, but the fellowship is a relation sustained to each other by persons. The very word “fellow” shows that, for it means “a comrade or associate.” In some colloquial usage, it actually means “a person.”

In the dire state of division into which we have been betrayed by Satan, a great many *things* have been so elevated as to become tests of fellowship. In spite of all the writing I have done on the subject, I still receive letters plaintively inquiring if I fellowship missionary societies, instrumental music, theological seminaries, orphan homes, the pre-millennial interpretation, Bible classes, uninspired literature, national television and radio programs, leavened bread, individual cups, fermented wine, unfermented wine, quartets, foot washing, and a host of other items and articles too numerous to mention— as they say on auction sale bills! I would not know how to fellowship any of these if I were inclined to do so, which I am not! I have personal convictions upon some, or all, of these disputed and controversial matters, but I do not doubt that the widespread ignorance on the subject of fellowship has worked greater evil than have all of these taken together, for it is that ignorance which has taken us apart!

The *koinonia* of which we speak is designated the “fellowship of the Spirit” (Phil. 2:1). It is used in conjunction with exhortation in Christ, consolation of love, tender mercies and compassions. I consider that the fellowship here specified is that which is secured by imbibing of the one Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13). “The unity of the Spirit” which we are enjoined to guard or maintain “In the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:3) results from the indwelling of the same Spirit in all who sustain a covenant relationship to God. Despite the diversities of gifts bestowed by the Spirit in a supernatural age, there was but one Spirit. “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit” (1 Cor. 12:4).

And despite our diversities of natural gifts we are all the temples of the same Spirit. Herein lies the secret of maintaining the fellowship, for it is a fellowship of the Spirit!

Fellowship is sharing. The life of fellowship is a life of sharing. Can we arrive at a statement which will properly portray the nature of the communion or fellowship we sustain through Christ? Such a statement must be broad enough to encompass our relationship to Deity as well as to the redeemed society of mankind. In 1 John 1:3 it is affirmed that “our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.” In verse 7 it is said, “We have fellowship one with another.” Any definition of our relationship must point toward God and toward those who are in Christ. It is spiritually axiomatic that God always conditions His requirements of us upon what He has done for us. We love because He first loved us. We come to Him because He first came to us. We share with others what He has shared with us. It is upon this basis that we suggest that fellowship on the divine side is a union with Christ and a participation in His life through the indwelling Spirit; while on the human side it is a partnership of brethren whose mutual relations were transformed by the gift bestowed upon them.

THINGS NOT BASIC TO FELLOWSHIP

1. Fellowship is not equivalent to endorsement of another’s position or views. Endorsement is to be equated with sanction or approval. The Apostles were in fellowship. But in the same chapter where Paul mentions that Peter was one of the three who gave to him the right hand of fellowship, he says but two verses further on in the text, “But when Peter came to Antioch I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned” (Gal. 2:11). Paul did not sanction Peter’s course, but they were both in the fellowship. We endorse many things in many people with whom we are not in fellowship; we are in fellowship with many people whom we do not endorse in many things! We come into

the fellowship of God and Christ, but they do not endorse all we think, say or do. Certainly God did not endorse all the Corinthian congregation did, but they were in the fellowship (1 Cor. 1:9).

2. Unanimity of opinion is not essential to fellowship. “The unity of the Spirit” is not contingent upon conformity in matters of opinion. Our relationship is one of community, not of conformity. In the exercise of our rational powers we will not all think alike. We differ in degree of intellect and power of perception. God has not made us mechanical robots. We are human beings, possessed of individuality. The personality is sacred, and that which seeks to destroy it rather than to provide for its fruition does despite to the image of God. Because of divergent backgrounds, varieties of experience, and differences in intellectual ability and aptitude, we can no more all think alike than we can all look alike. God, in His wisdom, did not make our fellowship in Christ Jesus contingent upon agreement in matters of opinion.

In Romans 14 we are informed that there were varied opinions held by those in the primitive congregation of saints. Instead of this constituting a basis of rejection and division, the specific instruction is given, “As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.” This chapter stands as a constant rebuke to those who would create a test of fellowship out of a personal scruple or opinion. It is not true that we need to see everything alike to be one in Christ Jesus. The apostle says, “One believes he may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables.” In our day, the one who believed he could eat anything would be called a sectarian by the other, and the weak one would be branded as a hobbyist. A hobbyist is one who opposes what we have; a sectarian is one who has what we oppose.

To the apostle, neither was a sectarian or a hobbyist, but both were children of the same Father and servants of the same

Master. The servant does not stand or fall because of the attitude or judgment of his fellow servants. "It is before his own master that he stands or falls." The man who exalts his opinion as a test of fellowship, seeks to become a master and forgets that he is also merely a servant. We have too many who possess a Messiah-complex. They play at being God! But no one has the right to lord it over his brethren, either living or dead, who has not demonstrated his prerogative by first dying and then living again. "For to this end Christ died and rose again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Rom. 14:9).

One who makes an opinion a test of fellowship, thereby formulates a creed, whether he admits it or not. The word "creed" comes from the Latin, Credo, I believe. Whatever one must believe to be in your fellowship, that is your creed. We have as many creeds as we have factions and parties among us and we have the latter precisely because we have the former. Perhaps no other group of people in the religious world today has as many unwritten creeds as do those who are the heirs of the Restoration Movement. Certainly few others are as intolerant in the defense of their formularies and rubrics. God did not make conformity in opinion the ground of our fellowship. Such a course in its ultimate is detrimental to and destructive of all fellowship.

Men will reason and those who do so will reach conclusions and arrive at opinions. But we do not all reason alike. All reasoning must be predicated upon our previous accumulation of knowledge. No one can reason from a concept he has not formed nor from facts to which he has had no access. No two persons on earth are exactly alike, either physically or mentally. No two persons know exactly the same things at the same time. It is obvious, then, that no two will reason exactly alike on all matters. Opinions will vary. It is well that they do, for this is the foundation of all research, investigation and invention. In the fellowship of saints it is made the basis for cultivation of patience, forbearance and tolerance. These are Christian virtues.

Instead of diversity of opinion destroying character, it is a contributing factor to its growth upon the part of those who respect brotherhood more than opinion, and regard the persons of the redeemed ones as of more value than things!

Ours is to be a unity of transformity, not of conformity. We are transformed by the renewal of our minds. This does not indicate that the transformed ones must be subjected to coercion, pressure and domination of any ruling hierarchy, clique, school, or faction to fit a prejudicial party pattern. In coming to Christ it is not our wills that are crushed, but our hearts that are broken. The sovereignty of human will is never disregarded by God. The dignity of the individual is never destroyed. In the apostolate, called, qualified and commissioned by Jesus Himself, each man retained his own individuality and distinctive personality. They constituted a fellowship by their mutual relationship unto Him.

3. Equality in attainment of spiritual knowledge is not the foundation for fellowship. In the family of God, as in the natural family, there are babes, young men and fathers. There are those who are well informed and those who are ill informed. We tend to make our own attainments the criterion for judging all others. That which took us a decade to learn, we expect others to understand and fully accept in ten minutes.

The Christian life is a walk. This implies steady and methodical progress toward the goal. But we are not walking together in a clump or cluster so far as our knowledge is concerned. We are strung out along the road. Fellowship has not so much to do with the point we have reached on the road, but the direction we are facing. All who are in the road and are facing and walking in the same direction, are in the fellowship of the Spirit.

Life is a growth. The very idea of growth bespeaks variety and alternation. We do not grow in spiritual knowledge by a

mushroom method, springing up overnight. There are few spiritual giants as there are but few physical giants. We should not be like the mythical highwayman, Procrustes, and force everyone to fit our iron bedstead. Not every child in a family reaches the same height and weight. We do not expect such of our children. We do not think it strange that those of the same parentage and who eat the same physical diet, vary in some respects. Nor should we think it peculiar if the same be true of those in the spiritual family.

Just as the farmer in Palestine had to wait with patience for the early and latter rain, so those of us who plant the seed of the kingdom have need of patience. Nothing is more clearly taught than the fact that those who have been made members of the body as it pleases God will not all be alike. There are members “which seem to be more feeble” (1 Cor. 12:22); “less honorable and uncomely” (verse 23). These are not to be rejected or refused because they do not measure up from a utilitarian standpoint. Instead, we are to bestow more abundant honor upon them, and the reason is “that there should be no schism in the body” (verse 25). Surely this implies that one cause of division is the disregard for those who are feeble. It is this very fact which makes love so imperative as a corrective for our ills.

None of us know all we should about the revelation of God. We have nothing of which to boast. “If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know.” We have been long on pride and short on love. Knowledge of God’s Word is not a substitute for brotherly love. We need to revise our thinking and cease to regard our own knowledge as a sacred canon for others. We will have different degrees of spiritual knowledge and we must be kindly dispositioned toward those who are striving to know, but have not yet learned. Education is a slow process.

Against my reasoning, it is urged that the Scriptures do set

up agreement and conformity as the basis of fellowship. We dare not postulate a position which violates the revelation of God. Therefore, without evasiveness or equivocation, we must examine our thinking in the light of the revealed word. It is only fair to state that I have been conducting a crusade for unity of all believers in the Christ for several years. Before I began writing upon this important theme, I did research in God's Word for many months. I sought to anticipate every argument which would be brought to bear upon my presentation. I examined every Scripture which I thought might be quoted in opposition, and satisfied my mind that what I had to offer would not violate God's revelation. I can truthfully say that during all of the questioning I have faced in the interim, not one Scripture has been presented which I had not previously scrutinized carefully.

One of the frequently quoted passages is Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" This has been made the basis for countless sermons on unity. It serves as an example of the folly and fallaciousness which often accompanies textual preaching. Origen, who has been called the father, of the sermon, contributed far more to the ignorance of the saints than to their enlightenment by foisting the sermonic style upon them.

Our own experience demonstrates that two can walk together without being agreed upon a lot of things. I walk together with many, but not in complete agreement with any. My wife and I do not always agree, but we walk together. Recently, in a question period, a young preacher arose and asked, "Do I understand that you are in fellowship with those with whom you disagree?" I replied, "They are the only ones with whom I am in fellowship. There are no others." Certainly the apostles walked with Jesus and with each other, but they were frequently in disagreement. It is not uncommon to read, "And an argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest" (Luke 9:46). Partnership is not conditioned upon sameness, nor community upon conformity.

Amos was not providing a dissertation upon the foundation of fellowship. He was a “herdsman and dresser of sycamore-trees” who was divinely sent from a small village south of Jerusalem to cry out against the ten-tribe kingdom to the north. To justify what appeared to be presumption and audacity, he gives a series of examples illustrating the principles of cause and effect. These are presented in question form. The first one was, “Do two walk together unless they have made an appointment?” This is the Revised Standard Version rendering. It is in harmony with the original Hebrew wording, the context and common sense. The idea was that, in the days of Amos, when you saw two pilgrims or wayfarers traveling together, you could reasonably assume they had made an appointment. Thus, when you heard a prophet declaiming against a certain people, you knew God had a message for them. The conclusion of the sequence is, “The Lord God has spoken; who can but prophesy?”

The making of an appointment to come together does not necessarily signify agreement. I knew two men who made an appointment to fight. Men might make an appointment to take a walk to continue an argument. That an appointment to meet together does not in itself imply agreement is evidenced by the average business meeting of the congregations. The whole truth is that there is no other unity possible of attainment than that of diversity. He who seeks for any other pursues a will-o'-the-wisp and will end up creating more division than peace.

Advocates of unanimity frequently refer to 1 Corinthians 1:10, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” It is well to remember that this was spoken to those who were in fellowship, for the preceding verse declares, “God is faithful, by whom you were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” The admonition to “speak the same thing” was not

written to produce fellowship. This provides an opportunity to make a statement of principle, the discovery of which has been invaluable to me in my research. Fellowship is not a fruit of agreement, but agreement is a fruit of fellowship. We do not enter the fellowship because we agree upon all things, but we strive toward agreement on things because we are in fellowship.

But what is meant by the expression, “That ye all speak the same thing?” Does it refer to endless repetition of the same words? Does it enjoin monotonous and changeless language, or stereotyped and invariable expression? We do not think so. This would stifle the vibrancy and life of the Christian way and reduce us to the use of dreary parrot-like phraseology. As is so frequently the case, the answer lies in the context. It is evident that the Corinthians, although in the fellowship, were not speaking the same thing. If we can find out what they were saying, we will know that this admonition was in direct contrast thereto. Paul was seeking to correct an existing condition by his instruction. What was that condition?

The next verse defines it. “It hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.” It is plain that the expression, “That ye all speak the same thing” was to remedy a state of contention in which they were saying different things. What were they saying? Verse 12 reads, “Now this I say, that everyone of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Cephas; and I of Apollos; and I of Christ.” The encouragement to speak the same thing was related to the schismatic and factional affirmations growing out of the party spirit and creating an ever-increasing area of contentions. It is for this reason James Moffatt gives the rendering, “Brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ I beg of you all to stop these party cries. There must be no cliques among you; you must regain your common temper and attitude.” We believe that this more nearly expresses the sentiment of the Apostle.

The Authentic Version renders the passage, “Now in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I urge you, brothers, all to hold together and not to have divisions among yourselves, but to accommodate yourselves to the self-same out-look and viewpoint.” The Centenary Translation reads, “Now I beg you, brothers in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to speak in accord, all of you, and to have no divisions among you, but to be knit together in a common mind and temper.” You will observe that it is the attitude, view point and outlook which are stressed in these. And it is our attitude which will maintain us in fellowship when differences of opinion and interpretation confront us.

To speak the same thing is but another way of urging them to cease their party cries. Each faction was announcing the name of its purported leader. These divergent names and parties separated and segregated God’s people. That is why they are condemned with such strength and boldness. And we need to quit raising our party cries and factional creeds today. It is in this sense we should speak the same thing, reaffirming our common ties of brotherhood, regardless of our unfortunate divergencies of opinion. The admonition of Paul is valuable, but it needs to be correctly interpreted and applied.

Another passage frequently cited is Romans 15:5, 6: “Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus, that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is urged by apologists for unity based upon absolute conformity that the terms “like-minded” and “one mouth” forbid and preclude differences of opinion. They fail to realize that such an interpretation would make Paul inconsistent with himself. The preceding chapter is devoted to pointing out that the saints do not all hold the same opinions and need not do so. Its very purpose is to forbid making a test of fellowship out of opinions. “As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions.”

What is meant by being “like-minded?” The Revised Standard Version reads, “May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Moffatt renders the passage, “May the God who inspires steadfastness and encouragement grant you such harmony with one another, after Christ Jesus, that you may unite in a chorus of praise and glory to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Harmony does not require sameness. A symphony orchestra is composed of many instruments. These do not all sound the same notes simultaneously. But they do not produce discord because they complement each other. They merge and blend in a composition because they are apposite— not opposite — to each other. The exhortations to like-mindedness have to do with the establishment and maintenance of harmony in our relationships. What we have said of this passage is explanatory of all of the others employing the same, or kindred, expressions. It is not necessary to review them one by one, for they are all in the same category.

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP

We have said that fellowship in Christ is that state or relation into which we have been inducted by proper response to the call of God issued in the Good News. “God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). The fellowship of our Lord is entered in response to a call issued by God. Whatever is required to make proper response to that call is all that is required to enter the fellowship.

That we are called by the Gospel will not be questioned by any among us. The Apostle confirms this in 2 Thessalonians

2:13, 14. "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning to be saved through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this He called you through our Gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is evident, then, that if we enter into the fellowship by proper response to the call of God, and if the call is issued in and through the Gospel, whatever is a proper response to the Gospel is obedience to its demands upon the alien sinner who believes the proclamation. "But they have not all obeyed the Gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Romans 10:16). This indicates there must be a report made, it must be believed, and that belief must motivate the honest hearer to obedience. This agrees with the statement of Paul, who affirms that through Christ "we have received grace and apostleship to bring about obedience to the faith for the sake of his name among all the nations." (Romans 1:5).

Obedience to the Gospel is the proper response to the call of God which brings one into the fellowship. What is entailed in that obedience? Jesus defines it in His final commission to His ambassadors. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved." What must one believe in order to be saved or admitted to the fellowship? On this matter, the record is clear. "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." Life comes through belief, and that which must be believed in order to life, is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. On this foundation fact, the community of Christ, the *ekklesia* of God, has been planted.

The belief of one fact and the obedience of one act brings one into a state of salvation, and thus into the fellowship of all the saints. This is not a new concept to those who are heirs of the Restoration movement. It was enunciated as the very

groundwork of that movement by Alexander Campbell in these words:

But the grandeur, sublimity, and beauty of the foundation of hope, and of ecclesiastical or social union, established by the author and founder of Christianity, consisted in this: *that the belief of one fact, and that upon the best evidence in the world, is all that is requisite, as far as faith goes to salvation. The belief of this one fact, and submission to one institution expressive of it, is all that is required of heaven to admission into the church.*¹

Lest there be any controversy over the implication of these remarks, Campbell says in the adjacent context,

“The one fact is expressed in a single proposition—that Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah,” and again, “The one institution is baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”²

Whatever is requisite to bring one into relationship with God, we certainly are distinctly told to welcome all whom Christ receives. We have no right to make anything a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation. Jesus says, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Therefore, every sincere believer in the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus Christ, and who is immersed in water upon the basis of that faith is God’s child and my brother.

Fellowship is a mutual relation of those who are in covenant relationship with God. It is brotherhood. Brotherhood is not produced by agreement upon matters of opinion, but by a common fatherhood. Fellowship is conditioned upon sonship; brotherhood is conditioned upon fatherhood. Those who have the same father and mother are brothers because of origin and should recognize the fact. “For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews 2:11). We can no more choose

our spiritual brethren than we can our fleshly brothers. But a rejection of anyone as a brother who has been begotten by our Father is not only a rebuff of that one, but an insult to the Father.

Apparently the danger in their reasoning has never occurred to many who today equate fellowship with absolute endorsement, unanimity of opinion, perfection in knowledge, or understanding of the Scriptures. Instead of hurting their brethren, they are actually signing their own death warrant and sealing their personal writ of damnation. It is a divine principle, "For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get." Now if one must understand all that we do and have as much knowledge as ourselves as a condition of fellowship, then for us to be in the fellowship of God and Christ we must know and understand all that they do. I hardly think that many of my brethren would affirm that they possess infinite knowledge of wisdom, but to deny it would be to make it impossible for them to be in fellowship with God, themselves being witness.

Our God is merciful and kind. His love is a divine philanthropy, a love of mankind, and not love for a particular kind of man. It is His will that all should be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth. If fellowship with God requires as a term of admission a knowledge of the philosophy of the Christian way, multitudes of humble souls will be damned without an opportunity for salvation. Upon such a condition, unity can never be achieved, and the prayer of Jesus becomes, not an ideal for which to strive, but a cruel mockery of the deepest yearning within our souls. However, salvation from sins and entrance into the fellowship have been predicated upon faith — not upon knowledge or opinion! And the faith required is belief in a person, not merely that he lived or died, but that he was the Son of God.

Faith must manifest itself. Like love, it must be expressed.

It is an activating force in the heart. Faith in Jesus as God's Son seeks a demonstration which will prove that the penitent sinner is submissive to the will of God. Divine wisdom has provided one act of obedience which strips us of pride and arrogance. That act is immersion of the body in water. When one who believes the cardinal fact of the Good News and submits to immersion of his person in water because of his faith, he rises to walk in a new life, for he is born with a new relationship, not only with God and Christ, but with all others whom they have received on the same basis. It is our contention that we have no right to inquire of any person who presents himself for baptism, concerning his views or opinions relative to the theological questions which have disturbed the ecclesiastical domain for centuries.

The only question we can properly ask is relative to faith in the Sonship of the Nazarene. "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God?" An affirmative reply to this indicates the suitability of such a person for immersion into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He may hold a hundred opinions that are peculiar, bizarre and strange to the rest of us, but this in no sense affects his entrance into the fellowship with us. He may alter and amend his opinions as he studies and matures, and such alterations and amendments, so long as they do not undermine his faith in Jesus, should not affect our relationship with him in Jesus. We must face up to the sad fact that this has not always been the basis of our procedure in the past. We have grown up in a factional atmosphere. We have inherited partisan prejudices and traditional positions. We have regarded as our brethren only those who agreed with us upon certain things which we have elevated and emphasized. We have sought to unChristianize and drive from us those who did not concur with all of our opinions.

It seems but fair that whatever items we intend to employ as the basis of fellowship should be included in our original catechizing of a candidate for immersion. We should not deceive one into thinking that all he needs to believe in order to be

regarded as a brother is that Jesus is the Son of God, then after baptism begin to attach riders or codicils to our agreement. If we do not intend to regard as a brother one who thinks that instrumental music is justified in the corporate worship of the saints, we should ask, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that instrumental music in the worship is a sin?" If we do not propose to regard as brothers those who hold a specific view as to the manner of the coming of our Lord, we should ask, "Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and oppose the idea of a premillennial coming?"

It is hypocritical to proclaim that we have no creed but Christ, then after men have been induced to come in among us upon that basis, to instigate other bases and tests, and hound out upon a wholly different principle those who were received upon their acceptance of the foundation we originally announced. This is creedalism with a vengeance, sheathing its claws and purring with kindness, until time for the dispatch of the unsuspecting victim. We should either write out a bill of particulars and demands to which prospective members must subscribe, or cease to evaluate fellowship and brotherhood upon such addenda and appendices.

By personal conviction I am opposed to the use of instrumental music in the corporate worship of the saints. I am also opposed to the premillennial interpretation of the new covenant Scriptures, as that term is commonly employed. But I refuse to be a member in, or champion of, an anti-instrument *party*, or a post-millennial *party*. I am not a brother to men because they cannot conscientiously worship where an instrument is used; and for that reason I am not an enemy to those who can. They are all my brethren, but not because of a position on instrumental music, missionary societies, the millennial interpretation, classes, cups, and all that other host of things which has been allowed to sunder, sever and split us into divergent groups. We are brothers because we have been born into the same family. We have the same parents. We recognize a

common Father. "Jerusalem which is from above is the mother of us all."

The brotherhood to which I belong is not limited to the subscribers of a certain paper, the members of a specific faction, nor to those whose names appear in a certain yearbook or directory. All of these means of classifying and categorizing are factional in the final analysis. They betray our fears and are symptoms of childishness and immaturity. The brotherhood of which I am a part knows no limits set by any man or group of men. It embraces and enfolds all whom God has received. It is not limited to those who are affiliated with some section, segment or splinter of the Restoration Movement. It may include many who never heard of it. It is a catholic brotherhood, universal in scope, consisting of all on earth, without exception, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, for its communion is "the fellowship of the Spirit."

I cannot choose my brethren. Only the Father can do that. I can welcome them, and if they are His children I *must* welcome them or insult Him by refusing and rejecting them. Does this approach to fellowship seem too broad? If so, the fault should be assessed against God. Within the bounds of my feeble and finite knowledge and judgment I accept no one whom he rejects, and reject no one whom he accepts. So long as one is as exclusive as God, can he be charged with being too inclusive? I hold that the flock of God is scattered over the sectarian hills and that our task is to reaffirm in our generation the truth concerning fellowship so that sectarianism may lose its attractiveness and the full glory and beauty of the unity of all believers in our Lord Jesus may shine forth and be the magnet to draw us all together.

We face grave problems and serious questions in any attempt to implement this ideal. Not the least of these has to do with the place which baptism occupies in our thinking. What shall we do concerning those whose piety and moral life is above reproach, but who have never been immersed? Will their lack of

understanding, or their ignorance of this one phase of the divine will debar them from that fraternity in which we are participants?

In any discussion of such questions we should not forget that the problem has grown out of the great apostasy. The primitive church of God was troubled and perplexed by many serious problems, but this was not one of them. The action of baptism was not a topic of dispute in the apostolic community. The necessity of baptism was never called into question. Those who composed the community of believers had accepted the authority of Jesus in all spiritual matters. They acknowledged His Lordship in their lives. It never occurred to them to question what He commanded. They knew that baptism was a burial, and having been told by Jesus that belief and baptism were prerequisites to salvation, they would as soon have tried to please God without faith as without baptism. Regardless of the rationalization of modern philosophy, it must be admitted that those who composed the primitive *ekklesia* were all immersed believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. The fellowship, or brotherhood, consisted only of such as gladly received the Word and were immersed. If our intention is to restore the primitive order, then we must begin with this premise.

It should be remembered, however, that what we say has to do with admission to the fellowship of the saints, and not to the question of ultimate salvation. What God may do with those who are involuntarily ignorant of the necessity of immersion as an inductive act is a matter for divine decision. He has not seen fit to disclose unto us what course He will pursue in every case that comes before Him. When all things were put under Christ, God excepted Himself. His grace is not subject to the will revealed to those of us under the jurisdiction of His Son. We should not seek to bind God by the precepts which He gave to govern us, for we are human and He is divine. But those who are in Christ Jesus arrive there by being baptized into Christ. On this point the revelation is clear and indisputable. It is the

koinonia, or fellowship, of those who are in Christ with which we are concerned.

Baptism is no light matter as viewed in the revelation of God. It is one of the seven items in the catalog of things essential to “the unity of the Spirit.” This unity is predicated upon the oneness involved in these items. The same passage which declares there is “one Body, one Spirit, one God, and one Lord,” just as positively affirms that there is one baptism. Now baptism is an initiatory act. It brings us into the fellowship of the saints. It is a divine appointment resting upon divine authority. It is a positive ordinance and not a moral one, thus is not subject to human judgment in its application to varied circumstances or conditions. We cannot create the terms of admission to the fellowship. This is the prerogative of the Sovereign. He has either authorized baptism as one of those terms, or He has not. If He has, no one dare alter, amend, or omit it; if He has not, baptism is a mere useless formality divested of the only authority which could possibly make it valid.

In order to understand the principles involved and to establish the reasoning upon which I base my conclusion that immersion is essential to entrance into the fellowship of the saints, I have set forth six points which I believe to be worthy of study and examination in this connection:

1. In an absolute monarchy the terms of admission to citizenship, or fellowship, must be established by the Sovereign and accepted and enforced by the citizens in conformity with the will of the Sovereign as revealed.

The kingdom of God’s dear Son is a monarchy. He is a King of kings. He is a Lord of lords. His authority is absolute. He affirms, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:19, 20). The ambassador to the Gentiles declares that God “hath put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church” (Ephesians 1:22, 23). To this

there is but one exception, the Father who placed all things under him (1 Cor. 15:27, 28). The citizens have no authority to determine the basis of fellowship. They cannot set up rules revealed by the King. As loyal subjects they can only hear the expressed will of the Sovereign and obey it!

2. Any wilful attempt upon the part of the citizens of such a monarchy to ignore, alter or amend the terms of fellowship prescribed by the Sovereign, will constitute a revolt against his authority, and must be regarded as an act of rebellion.

No authority over citizens can be absolute when its decrees are subject to the approval or ratification of the citizens before becoming the accepted rule. No authority can be absolute when its decrees may be vetoed or repealed by popular vote. It follows without question that a refusal of the citizenry to accept as final the regulation imposed by proper authority constitutes rebellion, and in its ultimate can only result in the overthrow of such authority and the creation of a state of anarchy. This generally stems from pride and misplaced conviction. So Paul writes:

If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes and words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

3. In any commonwealth composed of members called out of a previous state or condition, necessity requires that there be a law of naturalization, and such law must provide a specific point at which the applicant for citizenship achieves transition from his former state to the new state, and at which point he becomes a partaker of all the rights, privileges and prerogatives of the new state.

The wisdom of this principle will be especially evidenced in those cases where the state that is abandoned is at war with the one in which the subject seeks to enlist or requests citizenship. Not all political states are rivals, not all are at odds with each other. There are many sovereign nations which continue in peaceful coexistence. But in the spiritual realm there are but two kingdoms which embrace the universe of responsible mankind. These are antithetical to each other. They are engaged in incessant warfare. They are so diametrically opposed to each other in principle that there can never be a truce proposed between them.

When one responds to the invitation of the Sovereign of light, he must be translated from the power of darkness. There must be a line to cross which marks the border between the two states. Those on one side are not in the Kingdom of God's dear Son. They are not in the territory constituting His domain. Those who cross that line in response to His terms promising amnesty are citizens. Since there are certain privileges and rights accruing only to citizens it is essential that one know at exactly what point he is entitled to these. Failure to know would deprive one who was a citizen from exercise of His powers, or encourage one who was not a citizen to incur divine displeasure by intrusion upon a realm that was not his. The Apostle writes:

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

It seems apparent that there is a state in which one was not an heir, and another state in which he became a partaker of the inheritance of the saints; there was a state in which he lived under the power of darkness, and another kingdom into which he was introduced; there was a time when his sins were not yet forgiven, and a time when those sins were remitted. It is our

conviction that at the point where past sins are remitted, one is fitted to become a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light, and at that point becomes a citizen in the kingdom of the Son. The process by which one crosses the line is called “translation.” In its original sense this word signified to remove or transport from one place to another. This prepares us for our next point of consideration.

4. In a commonwealth depending for existence upon a mutual regard of the citizens for the authority of the Sovereign and a mutual respect for each other, it is imperative that all be able to determine who are citizens, and the acceptance of those who are not, will destroy the commonwealth by disregard for authority at the very entrance to the commonwealth, and by infiltration of those who do not regard the will of the Sovereign as supreme in their conduct.

There is every indication that many who are heirs of the Restoration movement in these days have never been indoctrinated in the fundamental aspects of the kingdom of heaven. They are addicted to the parroting of noble phrases and the mouthing of majestic mottoes which are devoid of any real meaning in their own lives. Many proclaim that the kingdom is an absolute monarchy and proceed as if it were a loosely organized democracy. They affirm that all power is given unto Jesus, then seek to exercise it during his absence from the earth. It must be always remembered that in matters involving absolute authority, personal ambition and sentiment have no place. It is not a matter of what the subject seeks, but of what the Sovereign says.

In a state dependent upon mutual regard for authority and mutual love for those under that authority, nothing should be clearer or plainer than the means of identification of the citizenry. If those who are accepted by the monarch as citizens are rejected by the other subjects it is evident that the authority of the Sovereign is trampled underfoot; if those regarded by the

Sovereign as aliens are invited to participate as citizens, not only will his authority be disregarded but all lines of demarcation will eventually be removed, and there will be an infiltration of those who are introduced on the very basis of their non-submission to authority, thus the kingdom will be thrown into confusion in our generation. The fact that this is done under the plea of compassion, the weakness and fallibility of human judgment, or misplaced love and sentiment toward others, in no way offsets the result or the responsibility for producing it.

5. Inasmuch as finite creatures are unable to read the hearts of men, or to judge the degree or extent of faith of others in a proposition, a community or fellowship established upon faith must have a visible and overt act which may serve as a test of such faith, and thus of admissibility to the fellowship, and such an act must be specific and established by decree of the Sovereign.

The foundation of the *ekklesia* of God is the proposition that the Nazarene is the Messiah, the Son of God. This is clear from the announcement of Jesus that he would plant His community upon that rock, when it was affirmed by Simon Peter. The nature of the foundation must be adapted to the nature of the structure it is designed to support. Spiritual institutions are built upon spiritual principles. It is the faith of individuals in this principle which introduces them as living stones into the divine structure. Unless faith is demonstrated or expressed those who are human cannot determine its extent or worthiness in the hearts of others. God can read the hearts of men and can anticipate their response, but we cannot. It is obvious that there must either be an observable act as an expression of faith upon which we may predicate divine acceptance, or we will not know whom to receive. It is our conviction, as it is that of the religious world generally, that the act established by divine authority is baptism. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ."

6. A law of naturalization established as an ordinance of induction or translation must be such that all who are entitled to the privileges it is intended to convey may freely comply with its requirements, and a proper subject complying with the ordinance is inducted into the state of which the ordinance is intended to induct, whether he understands the design or not.

This is an important principle to those of us who seek to restore the ancient order of the church of God. A proper understanding of it will enable us to avoid one of the great pitfalls of the sectarian or party spirit. If we substitute knowledge of the design of baptism for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, we will abort the will of God and set up a human creed of our own contrivance. One becomes a proper subject for baptism upon belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. He may be ignorant of many things with reference to the blessings accruing from his obedience to the act, or as to the time of their conferral, but his ignorance does not negate the promise of God.

While we are saddened by the sectarian divisions about us, we must not conclude that we can overthrow sectarianism by becoming sectarian. We will not restore unity to the children of God by denying that any child of God is our brother, but by an acknowledgment of the tie that binds in spite of our unfortunate separation. Every person who has been immersed into Christ upon the basis of his faith in Christ is my brother, and I have an invisible tie of affinity running from my heart to his heart through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Summarizing this portion of my thesis, and in harmony with the previously stated conviction that I dare not make anything a test of fellowship which God has not made a condition of salvation, it is my personal position that the ground of fellowship is belief in the Lord Jesus Christ expressed in obedience in the immersion of the believer. Faith and obedience — these constitute the foundation of our fellowship in him, for whatever is required to bring us into Christ, will also bring us

into that relation with all others in Jesus which is called fellowship.

THE POWER WHICH PRESERVES FELLOWSHIP

This brings me to the final point in my analysis. We must face up to the fact that we are members of a movement which has been rent and torn. Is there a power of sufficient strength to draw us together again, and having achieved that objective, to hold us together? There would be little gained for the present and nothing of permanent value in coming together only to cleave asunder in new outbreaks. If there is no such power we are doomed to continue in an ever worsening state of dissension and strife with an intensification of all the evils resulting from such a condition.

It seems presumptuous for one of my limitations to suggest that there is a remedy when so many other really capable diagnosticians have given up in despair. But “fools rush in where angels fear to tread” and thus I venture to suggest that there is hope in this dark hour. That hope lies in *agape*. This is a term employed only in divine revelation to designate an enduring and indestructible force of which it is affirmed that it outlasts anything else. Despite the versatility of the Greek language, this term does not appear in the classics. The philosophers, who sensed the existence of this power admitted that it lay beyond the range of human reason. Well might they despair of its discovery by natural means for it is a product of the Holy Spirit.

The word used to render the term is “love,” but it has adopted so many implications and taken on so many diverse connotations it seems ineffective. *Agape* is not an emotion. It is not a mere expression of affection. It is the act of a will that is fully committed to the divine purpose. It is a response to a divine sharing. “We love because he first loved us.” It is not a demonstration of love for that which is lovable, but for the

unlovable. It is not limited to those who agree with us or who see things as we do. It embraces our enemies and those who agree with us or who see things as we do. It embraces our enemies and those who spitefully use us. But just as God's *agape* for an alien world, expressed in the sacrifice of Jesus, battered down walls of partition, so that same triumphant force can today overcome all barriers.

We suggest as a fertile field for future research the nature and properties of *agape*. Neglect of this has reduced us to the pitiable condition in which our tragic shame is exhibited to a scoffing world. A recapture of *agape* will again make it possible for us to conquer the world for Jesus. When Christians were regarded as on the level of beasts fit only to be slain for the entertainment of the cruel, sadistic Roman populace, it was not their doctrine nor their philosophy which melted the hearts of their captors. Those who filled the arena for the gladiatorial spectacles, and who watched without a tremor as blood ran like water, could not withstand the power of *agape*. "Behold how these love one another." This was the word whispered through the stands and those who saw *agape* demonstrated before their eyes returned home awed and shaken by the experience. That same power can again move the forces of neo-paganism in our generation!

But the subject of *agape* deserves a fuller treatment and a better description than we can give it here, so we desist from further discussion now with the hope that we shall be able to develop the theme more fully at another time. "And now, brethren, we commend you unto God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified."

END NOTES

1. Alexander Campbell, "The Foundation of Hope and of

Christian Union,” *The Christian Baptist* **9** (April 1824): 177.

2. Ibid.

Authority of Silence

Restoration Review 7 (September 1970): 134

Restoration Review

The first serious rift in the restoration movement of which most of us are heirs was blamed on the introduction of instrumental music. I say it was blamed on it because I am not certain that was the basis of it. I have lived long enough to be a little skeptical of the rationalizations of some of my brethren. And I have learned that attitudes, temperaments and dispositions have a lot to do with family problems. When men have the will to divide they will find something to justify their doing so.

In any event, here we are, shamefully strife-torn and factional, going our separate ways and seeking to perpetuate our parties both pro and con, and quoting scripture to prove we are loyal to Christ while disregarding his prayer for our oneness. The brethren who make use of the instrument a test of union and communion, have apparently resolved upon an adamant stance based upon what they are pleased to call “the authority of silence.”

This is the chosen battleground. Here the civil war must continue until one side or the other surrenders or both are hammered into oblivion. This is the cutting edge of the current debate and the family tie will again be whacked in two every time it appears that the breach is being healed. Brother Reuel Lemmons writes in *Firm Foundation*, “We believe a valid

argument can be made on the authority of God in areas of silence. And the Holy Spirit thought so, too.”

Our brother contends that we should maintain the wall and perpetuate the barrier between those saints who use the instrument and those whose consciences will not allow them to do it. With him there can be no overt demonstration of the fellowship which we share in Jesus until all of the brethren see the matter of the instrument as he does. This is the position generally of a great host of brethren in the anti-instrument segment of the brotherhood.

I deny this. It is unscriptural and divisive. It will never produce unity in Christ Jesus but will foment hate and hostility. It is a fruit of legalism and results from a warped view of priorities and a mixed-up sense of values. It exalts opinion above the cross and makes our reconciliation less important than our personal, and often faulty judgment about things.

I have examined the validity of the argument related to “areas of silence” and I do not think that it can ever be made weighty enough to justify hacking the family of God to bloody bits and practicing the spiritual cannibalism involved in biting and devouring one another. The Holy Spirit said nothing about the authority of God in areas of silence, although our brother says the Spirit thought it. It is a sectarian game to think a thing and then try to make it appear that the Spirit thinks the same way.

The “valid argument” is quite simple. The Holy Spirit said sing. He did not say to play. Therefore, the latter is forbidden. It is immediately assumed that anyone who employs an instrument in conjunction with praise rendered to God thereby despises the authority of that same God. He is a rebel, a deliberate violator of heaven’s will. Granting the premises of the brethren who project the argument one might come up with such a simplistic conclusion. But other brethren insist on doing their own

thinking. And that is the real root of the difficulty. All would be well if everyone would agree that there are infallible interpreters and allow them to call all of the shots.

Some brethren feel there are extenuating circumstances. It is neither as black in one area nor as white in another as some would make it appear. They think Brother Lemmons overlooks some factors while looking over some scriptures to make his case. And they think that case is not as air-tight as Brother Lemmons tries to make it appear. I shall not recount their arguments. We have been exposed to the see-sawing back and forth for almost a century of sometimes ruthless debate, and nothing new has been added in these latter days.

I think that all of the brethren respect the authority of Christ. I do not know any who are deliberately flaunting heaven's decrees or spitting in God's face. Many of them do not accept the authority of *Firm Foundation* as equal with that of the Bible. They are anxious to recognize God's revelation but are not so overwhelmed by Brother Lemmons' explanation. I mention our brother in this connection because he has been in the forefront of arranging confrontations which so far have been spent in reviewing and rehearsing the hoary debaters' arguments based on "hamburger on the Lord's table," and the strange fire of Nadab and Abihu. Neither of these has any logical connection with the point at issue, but they are someone's brain children and everyone is proud of his intellectual progeny.

What about the "last ditch stand" on the authority of silence? Is it as devastating as we have always implied? Is it an atomic bomb that just must be dropped in the family circle to break up a happy home and blow us into gory bits? I doubt it! I once used it with all of the oratorical force at my command. I inveighed against brethren who were too imbecilic to acknowledge the force of my superior reasoning, branding them as traitors and apostates, men who would rather have their own stubborn way than to show deference for and honor to the King

of kings.

I think that, with most of us, the authority is not in the area of silence at all, but in what we read into it. God may have been silent but we have not been. We fill in the blanks for heaven and then assume that what we have filled in is as important as what God said on either side of the blank. God did not tell me to break up the family because some of the children did not come up with the same answer for the blank spaces as we did. We assumed that frightful prerogative for ourselves. When we did we started playing God.

I haven't the slightest idea what God will say at the judgment to my brethren who conscientiously think they can employ an instrument as an aid to their praise. I do not know if he will damn them all, or save them "without the loss of one." If he loves his sons and daughters more than he dislikes a piano he may forgive them. Of course, there is a possibility that he will not make a big ruckus about it one way or another. He may just *remain silent* about it.

I will be surprised, when we are "judged out of the things that are written in the books," if God quotes some of the scriptures we have quoted, and uses some of the syllogisms we have drummed up. That is the trouble with "areas of silence." There is too much silence in them. And we have to do too much deducing and speculating. Our brethren really need to do a thesis on "The Authority of God in Areas of Speculation," for that is exactly what they mean, although they will vociferously deny it!

Who really knows that the silence of God in a given area denotes condemnation? If a father says to his children, "Eat with your fork," does that necessarily imply that it would disregard his authority to also use a spoon? Should such a family divide into a spoon and anti-spoon faction and refuse to eat at the same table, or join in painting the house until the spoon-users

confessed their wrong and got rid of their spoons?

Did it ever occur to anyone that God might not have mentioned instrumental music because it just isn't that important to heaven? And that goes for a lot of other things which some of us do and others conscientiously oppose. A lot of things may not carry the weight in heaven among the angels that they do on earth. We do not *know* why God was silent about a lot of things. Until we do know we simply cannot predicate *authority* on his silence as if we did know.

All any of us can do in areas of silence is to be honest in our own personal convictions and scruples. We cannot bind our deductions and opinions upon others. We must be as true as possible to our consciences and we must allow others the same rights and liberties. God will fill in the blanks some day and then we will all know.

One thing that always comes up at this juncture is the question of safety. Some good brother will ask, "But isn't it safer not to use instrumental music since God was silent about it?" That argument sounds good but I never knew any person who made it to be consistent. He is anxious to be *safe* only when someone else has something that he opposes. One thing I do know and that is this. It is not as "unsafe" to take a chance on something God has not mentioned as to "set at nought a brother." He has mentioned that, you know.

I am going to receive my brethren, whether they use instrumental music or do not use it. I am not going to speak where God is silent. You cannot obey silence, you can only respect it. When you talk about obeying silence you have reference to what you have read into it. You cannot bind upon others what you think that God meant in areas where he did not speak. I do not know what the Father will do to those who use instrumental music. He did not say. But I know what he will do with me if I do not welcome and love the brethren. I do not have

to depend upon the silence of the scriptures for that. The Book is full of it!

We should never have divided over instrumental music in the first place. It was a sin to do so. And we should not remain divided over it, or our other silly hangups now! I refuse to help perpetuate a senseless feud. I am non-instrumental by persuasion, conviction and choice, but I am not anti-brotherhood by any means.

Let us heal the wounds in the body. Let us repair the breaches. Let us answer the prayer of Jesus in our generation! Let us be one in Christ now! It is time to stop arguing with one another and start living in him. Put up the hatchet! Take the axe back to the woodshed! Get rid of the tomahawk. We are not alien tribes. We are the family of God. Let's substitute the open hand for the clenched fist. We have no right to expect our children to accomplish what we are unwilling to undertake. Let us dare to be one in spite of our differences! That is the real challenge! —139 *Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121*

Fellowship

Restoration Review 2 (February 1873): 22

Restoration Review

My position on the fellowship we enjoy in Christ underwent a dramatic change when, in a foreign land, I traveled my personal “Damascus Road,” and, taking Jesus at his word, opened the door of my inner self at his insistent knock and invited him in to commune with me. When the love of God was poured out in my heart by the Holy Spirit, and I knew that I had crossed the frontier from death unto life because I could love *all* of the brethren, I was forced to evaluate anew all that I had ever believed and taught. And today I praise his name for the wonderful deliverance from the sectarian spirit which he wrought in my unworthy life through his marvelous grace.

Prior to that time I was in the vanguard of one of the two dozen factions into which our once glorious restoration heritage had fragmented. I equated our party with the kingdom of heaven on earth, and regarded conformity with us as faithfulness to the Lord. All of you were “brothers in error,” and categorized as either sectarians or hobbyists. In our arrogance we thought of ourselves as “the faithful church,” and in our narrow and bitter exclusiveness we confused fellowship with partisan recognition and acceptance, to be withdrawn in pharisaic self-righteousness when one, in deference to his conscience, could no longer acquiesce in the theological molehills elevated to spiritual mountain status, and whose tongue could no longer pronounce our shibboleth.

When Jesus struck the sectarian shackles from my soul I came to see that the only brethren I have are “brethren in error.” As Will Rogers put it, “We are all ignorant, but just about different things.” All of us are caught up in the human predicament. None of us knows all there is to know. Every person among us is a sectarian to some and a hobbyist to others. There are no exceptions! A sectarian is one who has something we oppose, and a hobbyist is one who opposes something that we have. And yet no one is a liberal or conservative because of where he stands, but because of where we stand as we look at him.

I am ashamed of my previous littleness and bigotry. I have repented of it and claimed the forgiveness of the Father. I no longer think that I best serve him by fighting with his other children. I receive every child of God as God received me, in spite of my hangups, mistaken views and misunderstandings. So whatever may be your personal position on any of the so-called “issues” which have been hammered and pummeled into prominence, you are my brother. I love, welcome and receive you, whether you concur with my views or not. You are in the fellowship of the saints. Wherever my Father has a child there I have a brother or sister. And I regard none of you as half-brothers or stepbrothers. I have no “brothers-in-law” but only brothers in grace!

The word *koinonia*, commonly translated fellowship, is a term of majesty and magnitude. William Barclay asserts there is no single English word which can fully represent it. Literally, it means “the sharing of a common life,” and the New English Version is to be commended for so rendering it. John declares that it is the sharing of eternal life, the life of God, made possible by the incarnation and manifestation of the Living Word, who came and brought his own tent with him, to share our nomadic life as foreigners and pilgrims.

When he besought the Father to give us the other Helper to

abide with us through the age of his absence, fellowship became the sharing of the life of the indwelling Spirit. It is called “the fellowship of the Spirit” in Philipppians 2:1 and in 2 Corinthians 13:14, where it is associated with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God. All of these are divine gifts. Not one is a human achievement. The fellowship of the Spirit is not something men can extend or withdraw. It is a state or condition created by God which they can enjoy and in which they share through divine grace and marvelous love.

We are called into this fellowship of the Son, by God, who is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9). The call is issued in the Good News, the factual Message concerning the Son, which makes it possible for us to share in his life of suffering here and in the glory of his life over there (2 Thess. 2:14). The proper response to the Good News introduces us to the fellowship of the Father and Son by the power of the indwelling Spirit. And that response is made by the belief of one fact and the obedience of one act. That fact is the noblest proposition ever affirmed in a universe defiled by sin, that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God. The act, validating his lordship over the whole scope of surrendered existence is immersion in water. No other creed except Christ must be confessed, no other act than baptism must be performed, in order to be translated into the fellowship of the redeemed of all ages.

It is my conviction that every sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, on the face of this earth, who is immersed upon the basis of his faith, is in the fellowship of which God’s precious revelation speaks. I do not receive him into the fellowship. I receive him because he is in it. And I receive him as God received me, in spite of my ignorance, shortcomings and immaturity. Fellowship is not something to be negotiated or arrived at through argument, debate or conformity to orthodoxy. It is the gift of God through a love so powerful as to be almost incomprehensible to a weak mortal like myself.

The fellowship is the vitalizing principle of the one body, and that body is not composed of sects, splinters, or segments of believers. It is constituted of individuals joined to Jesus as head, and joined to one another only because they are joined to him. Fellowship is first vertical, and then horizontal. So our unity is not based upon conventional conformity but upon covenantal community. Every saved person on earth is in that body and in the fellowship. In our present state of schism and division, no faction or movement has all of God's sheep in its partisan corral. I am in the fellowship with saints of God who never heard of Barton W. Stone or Thomas Campbell. Some of them have never heard of Alexander Campbell and the *Christian Baptist*. They have not even heard of W. Carl Ketcherside and *Mission Messenger*.

It is a stern indictment against us that we have confused fellowship with other things and have promoted division while proclaiming unity. Fellowship is not endorsement of the views, opinions, or interpretations of another. Fellowship is a transcendent relationship to provide community. Endorsement, on the other hand, is the sanction of, or assent to the ideas expressed by another. All of us endorse some views of those with whom we are not in the fellowship; all of us are in the fellowship with some whose views we do not endorse.

The brethren in Jerusalem did not all endorse Peter's conduct at the house of Cornelius, but it was precisely because they were in the fellowship that they questioned him (Acts 11:1-8).

Paul did not endorse the judgment or opinion of Barnabas in his desire to have John Mark accompany them, but it did not affect their fellowship (Acts 15:39).

Paul did not endorse the action of Simon Peter at Antioch but he did not sever him from the fellowship (Gal. 2:11), unless you have one of the apostles excluding another.

The scrupulous vegetarian did not endorse the act of eating meat but was forbidden to judge the one who did so, for God had received him (Romans 14:3). This shows that God receives men whose opinions, habits and actions others cannot endorse in good conscience.

The Bible teaches that individuals may live worthy of Christ and be saved even though in a congregation, the majority of whose members neither God nor themselves can endorse (Revelation 3:1-6).

Jesus said that a minority group will not be charged with endorsement of doctrine which they do not sanction or hold, even in a congregation which tolerates it and allows it to be taught (Revelation 2:18-29).

It is silly to equate fellowship with endorsement. Not one of us who has learned anything in the last twenty years, endorses all he believed that long ago. The ghost of fellowship present (to borrow a page from Charles Dickens) would need to withdraw from the ghost of fellowship past. We would be forced to exclude ourselves retroactively, for if we could be in the fellowship twenty years ago and hold our mistaken views, others can be in the fellowship today with the same views. If not, God is a respecter of persons. To argue that fellowship is contingent upon endorsement would mean that God could not be in fellowship with any of us, unless that which is perfect can endorse that which is not.

Again, fellowship is not conditioned upon harmony, but harmony is a goal, or fruit, of fellowship. We are in the fellowship not because we are in harmony, but because we are in the fellowship we strive to attain unto harmony. Not one injunction encouraging concord as found in the apostolic letters was written to produce fellowship. Every such statement was addressed to those who were in the fellowship and because they were in it. A good example is found in Philippians 2:1, 2, where

the apostle cites “the fellowship of the Spirit” as his ground for urging the saints to “fill up my cup of happiness by thinking and feeling alike, with the same love for one another, the same turn of mind, and a common care for unity.”

Certainly the congregation at Corinth lacked harmony. Paul postponed visiting them because he said, “I fear I may find quarreling and jealousy, angry tempers and personal rivalries, backbiting and gossip, arrogance and general disorder.” Still, he regarded them as called saints, in the fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ. They were God’s building, God’s garden, God’s temple. They belonged to Christ. And it was because of this he urged, “Mend your ways; take our appeal to heart; agree with one another; live in peace; and the God of peace will be with you. Greet one another with the kiss of peace.”

But I am asked upon what grounds a congregation may dissociate itself from one who is recognized as a brother. There is no scriptural basis for one congregation excluding another congregation. No discipline can be exercised beyond the grounds of jurisdiction, without a gross usurpation of power and the exercise of tyranny. No coalition of congregations in an area can, through elected delegates or self-appointed representatives excommunicate another congregation. All such pressure groups are spawned by the spirit of Rome and not by the Spirit of Christ. If we proclaim congregational autonomy let us also practice it!

I hold that the scriptures teach that there are only three basic reasons for delivery of one unto Satan. All three have a common root. Since fellowship is established upon a covenantal commitment, only the renunciation or repudiation of that relationship can bring about a rupture of the fellowship. The common life is entered by an acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus over our earthly existence, and it can only be disrupted by a renunciation of our pledge of allegiance to him as our sovereign.

One may deny the Lordship of Jesus in two ways— by what he does, or by what he says. If he adopts a life-style or engages in a course of conduct in defiance of the moral and ethical values associated with Jesus, he ruthlessly violates the covenantal relationship. His behavior constitutes a public and blatant declaration that he will not allow Christ to reign over him. Thus, one ground for dissociation from a brother is moral turpitude, and this is discussed at length in 1 Cor. 5.

Another basis for congregational action is the advocacy of doctrines which separate from God. One may be mistaken about many things, but erroneous opinions will not necessarily sever him from God, else God would have no children left. The Father loves his children. He will no more cast them out because of faulty spiritual vision or inability than I would drive out a physically retarded child. And God has a lot of such children. The body of truth is like the human body, in that it has many members. Not all of these are essential to being, some are essential only to wellbeing. All truths are equally true but not all truths are equally important.

What one must believe in order to enter into the fellowship of life is more important than what one may believe while in that life. Thus, a denial of the facts related to Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God will destroy the relationship created by acceptance of those facts. Such a denial separates from God exactly as such acceptance unites with God. If one is right about Jesus he can be wrong about a lot of things and still be saved. If he is wrong about Jesus, he can be right about everything else and still be lost. Fellowship is not conditioned upon being right about a given number of things, but upon being in the right One who was given for our sins.

The third basis for such actions as I am discussing is the factional spirit. This motivates one who is subverted and self-condemned to ignore all entreaty and admonition and to pursue a course of fragmentation of the body. To erect a “pro” or “con”

party about any opinion or secondary matter, even if it is a truth, is a work of the flesh. It is a sign of deep-seated carnality and childish immaturity. Thus, the apostle says, "Avoid stupid controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels over the law, for they are unprofitable and futile. As for a man who is factious, after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him." No one ever started a faction until he enticed others to sympathize with and follow him. "It is these who set up divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit" (Jude 19).

These three destructive tendencies are the only tests of union or communion for the community of the reconciled ones. A consistent course of conduct which denies that Jesus is the source of life, advocacy of those doctrines which deny that Jesus is the foundation of life, and fragmentation of the body which expresses on earth that Jesus is the life— these constitute the sole scriptural reasons for a refusal to welcome, walk and work with our brethren.

No honest opinion arrived at from personal study of the sacred volume, and held in good conscience, can ever be made a test of fellowship without first becoming an unwritten creed. Regardless of whether one's deductions may be right or wrong about cups or classes, music or the millennium, he must be received and retained, recognized and respected. No personal experience to which he testifies, whether we regard it as valid or invalid, can be made the excuse for driving one forth from under the umbrella of our congregational love.

It is at this point we reveal the tragedy growing out of our mistaken view of the glorious fellowship of the Spirit. Although we began historically as "a project to unite the Christians among the sects," we are now one of the most schismatic religious movements on the contemporary American scene. We are divided over missionary societies, instrumental music, centralized control, colleges, orphan homes, the support of

national and international radio and television programs, the right to own television sets, leavened bread, unleavened bread, the manner of breaking the bread, fermented wine, individual cups, Bible classes, uninspired literature, the work of evangelists, the pastor system, marriage of divorced persons, speaking with tongues, divine healing, the charismatic renewal movement, foot-washing, the hour of meeting to eat the Lord's Supper, and a host of other things too numerous to mention, as they say in auction bills and posters.

Not once in all of God's word is division of God's children authorized as an approach to problems within the body. Every time division among the saints is mentioned it is condemned, and yet we could not be more divided if it were commanded of God. The fact is that we have had only one approach to differences when they arise— partisan debate, and only one solution where debate failed— division. Yet the first is discouraged and the second is condemned as contrary to the will of God.

And now, that we have splintered and fragmented ourselves until our very plea for unity makes a laughingstock of our radio broadcasts, we are told that we must thresh out every angle of every wrangle, and argue to a standstill every action of every faction, before we can ever have the satisfaction of a combined effort for our precious Lord. I deny that. And I have renounced partisan debate with any of my brethren as holding out any hope for a return to sanity of a movement madly tearing at its own flesh and consuming its own offspring.

I want to be clearly understood. I ask no one to see things as I see them. I solicit no one to work as I work. I shall love you as much if you disagree with me as if you agree. My love is not based upon your mental assent to my views but upon what Jesus did for us all. But I want to serve notice here and now that I reject our whole sectarian approach to the brotherhood of the ransomed and redeemed. My brethren are not limited to the confines of one narrow partisan corral. I am sick of the whole

hypocritical partisan approach and I never intend again, so help me God, to sell my soul to any group whose price for their love must be my hatred and hostility to other brethren.

I have brethren who believe that Bible classes are wrong and other brethren who have educational wings which look like state office buildings. I have brethren who use only one container for the fruit of the vine and other brethren who use hundreds of little plastic glasses to serve the multitude. I have brethren who oppose Herald of Truth and never miss seeing it, and other brethren who support it and never look at it. I have brethren who would never allow an electric organ on the premises even for a wedding, and others who play on one every time they assemble to sing God's praise. But not a one of these has anything to do with the fellowship which is in Christ Jesus!

All of these I have mentioned are my brothers and I love them all. I do not agree with them upon everything they think, say or do. Certainly I cannot condone or endorse that with which I do not agree. But they are not answerable to me. They are answerable to the same Father who will also judge me. And I shall never again set at nought a brother for whom Christ died, over such matters. I will allow him to stand or fall to his own Master. I will not play God with the lives and thoughts of God's other children.

It is not easy to take the road of love for all of the brethren. It is the most difficult thing I ever sought to do. It makes you vulnerable, naked in spirit and open to attack. But I am committed to trudging this road into the sunset glow because it is the one which He asked me to walk. If it means crucifixion at the hands of those whom I love, the cross is not too great a price to pay for the crown.

What does this mean spelled out in terms of our practical problems of today? It means that the brethren who labor, teach and study at Abilene Christian College are my brethren. It also

means that those who are associated with Florida College occupy the same spot in my heart. But it also means that the brethren at Cincinnati Bible Seminary and Ozark Bible College are just as much my brethren. I love them all. They are all God's children. They are all members of the royal family. I will go among them all, sharing with them my concepts as they will allow, and when they will not allow, then listening to them that I may learn and grow in knowledge as well as grace.

It means that Pat Boone is my brother and Shirley Boone is my sister. Whether the personal experience to which they testify is the work of the Spirit as they interpret it, or an emotional and psychological projection, as others interpret it, has not one thing to do with fellowship in Christ Jesus our Lord. I have all my life put up with people who had difficulty with English and I am not about to run someone off who says he can speak something else. My real trouble is not with brethren who claim to speak in tongues and don't know what they are saying. It is with those who claim to speak English and I don't know what they are saying!

The brethren who produce and propagandize the Herald of Truth programs are my brethren. The brethren who take to the air waves and support radio programs to attack their means of support are my brethren. The brethren who would not allow a television set on the place, and have to go over to a neighbor's place to watch the election returns, are my brethren. If I have to wait until everyone is consistent before I can have a brother, I will never have one, and if they all become consistent, they might exclude me.

So I propose to allow my brethren to go their way, blasting and bombarding one another as antis and liberals, but I will receive them all as long as they seek to cleave to Jesus as their prophet, priest and king. And I think all of them earnestly seek this. I no longer carry a pocket-full of labels and tags. And I have resolved never again to be boxed up in a neat factional

package as a public display of loyalty. Pigeon-holing is for the birds!

Centuries before our Lord made this “the visited planet,” God used the tongue of a herdsman from Tekoa to thunder his wrath upon the people of Tyre because they “remembered not the brotherly covenant.” Will the divine censure poured out upon a people who once united to erect an earthly temple, be less severe upon those who were incorporated as living stones in a spiritual temple, and who have trampled under their factional feet the covenant of brotherhood? Will we be forgiven if we take the keen sword handed us to vanquish a malevolent foe, and bathe it in the warm spiritual gore of God’s other children?

I know not what course others may take, but I am resolved to ignore the cold and cruel fences and barriers our fathers erected to separate and segregate members of the divine family. I refuse to perpetuate the senseless feuds which originated in passion and have been kept inflamed by the tongues of bitterness and haughty pride. The dynamic of love has transformed into glowing transparency those walls which previously were opaque and I can now see my brethren on both sides of them. Praise God for such wonderful love— love which can melt hearts of stone— love which can span the frightful chasms eroded by hostility and bitterness.

Regardless of your personal feeling toward me, regardless of our divergent views, you are my brethren. All of you. We are in the fellowship of the divine. And I have been blessed above measure by a recognition of this wider, broader, and greater fellowship which makes possible soul-expansion in the pure atmosphere of the abundant life. I have learned the meaning of the poetic words:

He drew a circle and shut me out,

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;

But love and I had the wit to win,

We drew a circle, and took him in.

Myths of the Restoration Movement (1)

Restoration Review 2 (February 1982): 228

Restoration Review

I have learned a great deal about the art of meditation as I have grown older. One of the things that has been precious to me is the fact that the word *meditate* in the Hebrew means “chewing the cud.” The early Hebrews constituted an agrarian and pastoral society. As the herdsmen and shepherds sat close to their flocks as dusk began to descend, they saw them regurgitate what they had eaten, form it into a ball and chew it over and over to extract all of the nourishment from it.

The shepherds were aware that much the same process took place in their minds as they sought to digest the thoughts which they had learned from others or had ascertained from their own rationalizations. It was only natural that they would think of their ponderings and reflections as “Chewing the cud.” Certain animals are physical ruminants, man is a mental ruminant. I think it hardly unlikely that many will deny that, in our present culture, meditation is becoming a lost art. In the Middle Ages it was encouraged, and contemplative societies flourished. I am sure you’ll pardon me if I sound like a resurrected patriarch by pointing out the literature, poetry and songs of the long ago had a depth about them that many of our current productions cannot equal. I attribute this to the fact that they were written from the depths of the heart, whereas a lot of

modern stuff is skimmed off the top of our heads, which have lost something since we discarded wearing hats.

But enough of this. I want to do a little series about some of the conclusions I have reached with reference to that illusory something we have come to call “the restoration movement.” I thought of labeling the articles “Milking Sacred Cows.” I decided against it, not so much because of those doing the milking as out of respect for the cows. God made cows, but they are not responsible for being made gods. The golden calf which Aaron made could not help it. It is ignorance, superstition and traditional disrespect for God and His revelation which make an otherwise innocent Hereford or Guernsey an object of worship. And it is generally a priestcraft that makes the switch.

I shall actually be writing about the myths of restoration. And I shall try not to “myth the point.” I had to put that in before some of my critics thought of it and claimed originality for it. The truth is, I will welcome criticism. I have had a lot of it, much from other editors who can scarcely be trusted to read aright what another editor writes. But I have outlived a lot of my critics and outloved a bunch of those that remain. I am no longer under heavy fire. The bombardment has ceased. That is a strange position for me to be in and I shall try to write in such a manner as “to smoke out a new set of critics from the bushes.”

That may be more difficult than it appears at first. I feel that a lot of those who entered the fray and shouted loudest at first, have concluded that I was right in a lot of what I was saying. They have chosen to retreat instead of to surrender. Obviously they cannot be expected to announce that they have been wrong all of their lives, like I did. They would lose their prestige. I didn’t have any to start with, so I couldn’t lose any. As a matter-of-fact I may have gained a little. I know that I certainly feel better and it took a heavy load off my shoulders to confess that I had been in error, and wasn’t as perfect in my thinking as I had always thought, and honestly led others to

believe. I was not cut out for the role of playing God and gave it up.

A goodly number of folk have thought that I should not write about *our* myths. They feel that we have not yet cleared up all of those among our good Baptist, Methodist or Church of God friends, and there is no use of getting our folks all stirred up, when we could be writing about the errors of the Mormons or Mennonites which, incidentally, are not in the same class or category. The only thing they have in common is that both begin with "M." But I am getting old and time is running out. I do not think I will be able to correct all the faults of the Baptists and Presbyterians. They have plenty of fault-finders of their own. Besides, it takes someone like me to write like this.

Young people cannot do it because they fall into two classes. Either they are naive and starry-eyed and think there's nothing wrong with us, or they know so much that is amiss they have given up hope and jumped ship in midstream and gone down "unwept, unhonored and unsung." Those who are middle-aged and in what is called "the prime of life" are too busy fighting other brethren over symptoms. They have no time to sit down and analyze the cause. They occupy their time tomahawking each other over cups, classes and colleges; or over societies, socials and saxophones, until they have never really stepped to one side and thought it through. And we either have to come apart a little way, or we will come apart altogether. I know because I was the respected sachem for our tribe, and if I do say so, I swung a pretty mean hatchet in those days.

I have concluded that you have to arrive at a point in life where those who may stone you do you a favor. Then you can say what you really think. You cannot be fired because you cannot be hired. No one can contract your sphere of influence because you are not under contract. It is a little like being not under law but under grace. That makes you free. And one of the things you are free from is fear of what men can do to you.

When I was twenty-five and “breathing out threatenings and slaughter” against all who disagreed with me, I can see now that it was a cover for my inferiority. I suspect that I was afraid of my shadow. It is beautiful to arrive at the point where you are no longer afraid of the “valley of the shadow.”

One question I am frequently asked is what I propose to do with those who have died believing these myths about “the restoration movement,” if they turn out to be myths. I do not propose to do anything with them. I regard them, and I suspect God regards them, exactly as those who were mistaken about other movements like the reformation and the renaissance. I do not believe any of us will be judged on our relationship to any movement, but to Jesus Christ. One can believe in Christ and not be attached to any historical movement begun by men, just like he can be a member of any such movement and scarcely believe in Jesus at all. God adds him to the only thing he needs to be a member of.

We need, for our own sanity (and saintliness) to get over the idea that any of us will be saved by being right on things. We can be right about Jesus and wrong about a lot of things and still be saved. If we are wrong about Jesus we can be right about everything else and still be lost. Being ignorant is not a sin so long as it is involuntary. If it were none of us would stand a ghost of a chance. It is a part of the human predicament to which all of us are heirs. It is voluntary ignorance which is always a sin. One of the most outstanding blessings to come to us is that God made our hope dependent upon faith in a person rather than in knowledge of a list of things.

If the latter had been the case we could never be sure if we were saved. We could never be certain that we were correct about enough things, or about the right ones, to make it to glory. We might be right about nine things and wrong or ignorant about a tenth and have the pearly gate slammed shut in our faces. It isn't that way, praise God. “If anyone imagines that he

knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. But if one loves God, one is known by him” (1 Corinthians 8:3). Because of their position on baptism, members of the Church of Christ have always said, “It is easier to get into heaven than into the Baptist Church.” They need to be careful lest it be said “Because of their legalism it is easier to get into heaven than into the Church of Christ.”

Myths of the Restoration Movement (2)

Restoration Review 3 (March 1982): 253

Restoration Review

One definition of the word myth has always intrigued me. A myth is “a legend embodying the convictions of a people as to their own origin and early history and the heroes connected with it.” And since I am writing about myths of the restoration movement I might as well begin with the biggest one first. It would be a tragedy to get equipped to go out and hunt whales and end up seining minnows. But let me first clear away a little matter which might leave a false impression.

I am speaking about *the* restoration movement as if it were the only one ever hatched out in the fertile minds of men. Actually I should be speaking of *a* restoration movement. As any student of church history knows there have always been such movements from the third century on. Our own is but one of sixteen which were launched in the fifty years immediately following the American Revolution. Many of the others were German or Dutch in their origin. Ours was the only one of Scotch-Irish descent, which may have something to do with its popularity with us. We do not speak German. Some of them still survive; others have expired. All of them had as their goal the unity of all Christians by a return to the apostolic pattern for the church. And all of them had two other things in common. They all exploded into fragments and splinters and they all spoke of

their own as *the* restoration movement.

Each movement was composed of those who thought that the blueprint for it originated in heaven. I well remember some of our old-time brethren who were high on prophecy. They would lecture on the Book of Revelation so graphically that your hair stood up like you had stuck your finger in an electric socket, and you were afraid to walk home from the meeting in the dark. If someone had yelled “Boo!” at you, you’d have been running yet. They always located the restoration movement in Revelation 14:6. It came after the origin of the Protestant sects. John said: “I saw an angel fly in the midst of the heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth.” At first some of them designated Thomas Campbell as the angel until they found out that he dipped snuff all of his life. He quickly fell from heaven.

When I learned that all groups who thought they were the subject of divine prophecy—including the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Seventh Day Adventists—had their own angels, I wanted to sue them for fraud and for obtaining money under false pretense. Gradually, I came to see that all are caught in the same trap. That does not mean that all are equal in credibility. I am not talking about credibility. But it does mean that every movement started by men follow the same human tendency of reading that movement back into the sacred volume. But there has never been an indication that God is as interested in any movement as those who join it and become zealots for it.

As I view it, the greatest error in our history (and there have been three of major proportions), is the brainwashing of ourselves into believing that a movement which began in the early nineteenth century was suddenly and miraculously transmuted into the kingdom of heaven, to the utter exclusion of every other sincere believer in Jesus Christ who was not a member of such a movement. This did a number of things which severed us completely from thoughtful people who could not buy

our thinking. Let us look at a few of them.

It wiped out seventeen hundred years of struggle as of no consequence at all. It negated other attempts at restoration which literally cost the lives of thousands of persons. Actually, it is questionable whether some members of “The Church of Christ” believe anyone was saved from the death of John the apostle to the birth of Thomas Campbell. I am thinking just now of Peter de Bruys of Provence, of whom it was said, “He made the most laudable attempts to reform the abuses and to remove the superstitions that disfigured the beautiful simplicity of the gospel.” That was in 1110. After preaching such reform for 20 years he was burnt at the stake at St. Giles’s in 1130.

Incidentally some of the things he urged upon his followers were: 1. That no persons whatever be baptized before they were come to the full use of their reason. 2. That it was an idle superstition to build churches for the service of God, who will accept of a sincere worship wherever it is offered. 3. That the crucifixes used as instruments of superstition deserved to be pulled down and destroyed. 4. That the real body and blood of Christ were not exhibited in the eucharist; but were merely represented in that holy ordinance, by their figures and symbols. 5. And lastly, that the oblations, prayers, and good works of the living, could be in no respect advantageous to the dead.

I call that pretty good thinking for one who preceded Martin Luther by 400 years and Thomas Campbell by 800 years, and who never attended one of our Christian colleges. I look forward to meeting Peter de Bruys in heaven along with a host of others such as Huss, Latimer, Ridley, and a whole catalog of those courageous souls who qualified for inclusion in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs. I think Jesus meant what he said when he declared, “He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” I will count myself honored to stand among those who watched their flesh shrivel to a blackened cinder because of their supreme faith in him. That is, if I make it!

Alexander Campbell wrote in 1837:

If there be no Christians in the Protestant sects, there are certainly none among the Romanists, none among the Jews, Turks, Pagans, and therefore no Christians in the world except ourselves, or such of us as keep, or strive to keep, all of the commandments of Jesus. Therefore, for many centuries there has been no church of Christ, no Christians in the world; and the promises concerning the *everlasting* kingdom of Messiah have failed; and the *gates of hell have prevailed against his church!* This cannot be; and therefore there are Christians among the sects.¹

I concur with this. We have confused “THE CHURCH OF CHRIST” with the body of Christ, the family of God. This is the very essence of sectarianism. If not, why not?

We know when the restoration movement began. We know who began it. And we know why it was begun. It is too young to be the church which Jesus built and too old to be the sect it has become. We have tried to make it identical with the church by resorting to childish and inane subterfuges. One of the most absurd and asinine is the chiseling on the cornerstones of modern church buildings, which were themselves unknown to the new covenant scriptures— Established 33 A.D. We have fooled no one but ourselves. Some of our religious neighbors have gnashed their teeth while others have laughed up their sleeves at such puerile effrontery.

In doing this we have not been thinking of the organism given life of the Spirit and set in motion upon the day of Pentecost. There is no proof of the fact that God ever started anything like we build upon such cornerstones. But we have sought to distinguish ourselves from every other believer in the neighborhood, all of which we conclude started later than we did. We have a direct chain leading back to the beginning, others have shorter chains tying them to some event in history which

originated them. It is a travesty upon God's blessed word to see the words engraved upon three cornerstones in the same town, where the members built upon those cornerstones have nothing to do with each other, and will not even speak to one another when they meet in the post office.

Do we not tend to confuse the world by such tactics? Do we not leave them thinking that Christ is divided? We send missionaries into towns where the good news has been preached for a century and the first thing they do is to call together a dozen people who share in their peculiarities and place upon the cornerstone where they meet— Established 33 A.D. As one old brother said, "What they represent may have been started then but this place was established last March after a big row in the Baptist Church."

END NOTES

1. Alexander Campbell, "Any Christians Among Protestant Parties," *Millennial Harbinger* (September 1837): 411.

Myths of the Restoration Movement (3)

Restoration Review 4 (April 1982)

Restoration Review

Those who claim to be heirs of “the restoration movement” launched by those stalwart and worthy Presbyterians, the Campbells and others, believe they have restored the church which Jesus built. For this reason that movement is now universally referred to as “The Church of Christ.” This implies that only those who are allied with it are in the kingdom of heaven and have any hope of being saved eventually. Some narrow it down still more. They recognize as “children of the light” only those who are members of the specific party or faction with which they are allied. Those who have defected from them for conscience’ sake and have flaked off are regarded as heretics. It is thought they are rejected of the Father because they are no longer received by the party.

It is a common resort to select five or six things prominent in the original body as established by Jesus, and attempt to prove the movement is identical with it by showing that these things are basic to both. Obviously, such matters as the community of goods, foot-washing, and the holy kiss are explained away or dealt with facetiously by those who make the argument. This is also a common method employed by the Catholic Church which “believes that Christ founded the Catholic Church to guarantee and preach his divine revelation;

that he promised it his divine assistance even to the consummation of the world.” This is a statement by Joseph H. Cavanaugh, of Notre Dame University, in his book “Evidence For Our Faith.”

In his chapter entitled “Marks of the Church,” he affirms that “The marks of the church are external, objective signs by which the Catholic Church can certainly be known as the authentic Church of Christ.” His marks are “unity, catholicity, holiness and apostolicity.” Now almost every preacher in “The Church of Christ” has a sermon entitled “The Marks of the Church.” For years I preached on that, or a kindred theme, every time I engaged in an evangelistic meeting. I labored diligently to show that the five things I had selected as marks were true of the “Church of Christ” and of no other group of people on earth. That was a little presumptuous and probably not quite true. But like the Catholics I thought this proved something that it did not.

Both the Catholics and ourselves are trying to prove that we are “the authentic Church of Christ.” Each of us has selected wholly different marks by which to establish it. It was not until after I had studied the course in Applied Psychology, that I could detect the fallacies in our propagandizing. I threw away my sermon outlines. Eventually I placed them all in the garbage can. It is evident that it is not by doing certain things right that we prove we are the body of Christ. Everyone of these can be and have been faked in the past. Only one thing can prove we are his. That is our relationship to Him through the Spirit. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9).

Then which church is the right one? The right one is the only one. It is the one into which we are inducted and are being sustained by the Spirit. “For by one Spirit were you all baptized into one body and were all made to drink of that one Spirit.” The Spirit never baptized anyone into a sect regardless of its

name. There is only one church. There never was but one. There will never be another. It is a divine organism, not a human organization. It is a creation of God, not a concoction by man. One might as well try to institute another Holy Spirit as to form another body. "There is one Spirit and one body." When God looks at His church He does not see the Methodist, Presbyterian or Baptist churches. He does not see the Nazarene, the Church of God, the Church of Christ, or the Christian Church. Not at all. He sees the one body consisting of every saved person on earth, every called out person who has responded to the call.

All of these names are humanly given. Some are found in the sacred scriptures, some are not. But all of them have been selected by men to apply to something smaller than God created. So long as they exist his is a futile search who seeks the right one. Some are more nearly correct in certain aspects than others. Often merely lip service is given to those points. "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." As long as God's people are divided none of their parties is the right one. The saddest mistake we were betrayed into by Satan was the calling of these various parties, fragments and sections of the Christian citizenship, churches.

They are not churches and cannot be. We have multiplied confusion by designating sects as churches. Who knows what good would accrue if everyone became absolutely honest, acknowledging there was but one church, and that all we had done was to create sects. In reality, there can never come about the unity for which our Lord prayed until something like this happens. It can never be achieved by any group which expects to attain it by telling everyone, "Come and join us and we will all be one." Such unity is the snake and frog approach, in which the snake makes the proposal that the frog contribute to unity by permitting himself to be swallowed by the snake.

Human tendency being what it is, men would join the

largest and most popular and successful of the sects. Thus all in the United States would become Baptists. Universally all would become Orthodox or Roman Catholic. But it is not a matter of joining any sect, large or small. What God wants to see is the abolition of all the sects, starting with the Catholic Church as the mother of all and extending to the smallest and most exclusive. All are as repugnant to God as any other work of the flesh. The glory we give to the sect is glory subtracted from the one body.

If we could one time sense the feeling of God as He looks at the sects which shiver the body to bits we would immediately divest ourselves of them and become Christians, and Christians only. We would cease to be Church of God Christians, or Church of Christ Christians, or Friends Christians or Baptist Christians. It is pride in what we have created which makes us feel that we cannot do without it, that we would be spiritually naked if it were taken from us. It is pride which causes one to say, "I was born a Baptist and I intend to die a Baptist!" Or a Methodist! Or a Presbyterian! Or a Catholic!

What operates to cause men to cling so tightly to something other men have started? I think the answer is found in their insecurity. We are cast into a world geared to promote fear and unrest. After we have defended, fought for and leaned upon a System, we feel that we must cling to it, stand by it, or be lost. It is an indication of a lack of faith in the eternal values which a loving Father has provided for us. We want to walk by sight and not by faith. We trust the inventions of men over the provisions of God because like Moses at the mount, "we exceedingly quake and tremble."

It is obvious that we regard as heroes of the faith those who leave their parties and sects to come to us, but we blast as heretics those who leave us because they can no longer tolerate our creedalism, rigidity, and legalism. Those who come to us are getting their eyes open, those who give up on us are "closing their eyes against the light." I personally feel that each of us

must be accountable to God for what He does. If he feels that some position we take is unscriptural or unscrupulous we should not attempt to hold him to it in violation of his conscience. We cannot judge one's allegiance to Christ by his attachment to any sect. The attempt to hold one by threat or coercion is contrary to the spirit of righteousness. We have not been appointed as God's secret agents to police other men's hearts. We are not divine CIA agents to run everyone into the ground who holds a slightly different opinion than ourselves. —139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121

Myths of the Restoration Movement (4)

Restoration Review 6 (June 1982): 314

Restoration Review

The truth revealed to us from heaven was never intended to be static. It was not a stagnant pool filling a depression hollowed out in one year of time. I think that the actual revelation was completed during the lifetime of the apostles and prophets. This brings me into some conflict with those who think there are prophets of God now. I especially ran into the problem in the 1960's when I was doing a lot of work on university campuses. Some college student, who was generally like Elijah, "a hairy man and girt with a leather girdle about his loins," would arise and say, "Hear the word of the Lord which came to me this morning," and then quote from the King James Version. I've often wondered where these prophets are now, and if they are still with it. They were a spin-off from the drug culture which blew the minds of so many of our youth, and led them into fantasies.

But I realize that while the revelation was complete, the understanding and grasp of it was never so in any generation. It was accepted into the hearts of men and given a thorough mastication by their minds. But no one approaches knowledge in a vacuum. Every experience of life, every hardship and every pleasure, enter into his heart and influence him. So truth is a river, ever flowing, sometimes rapidly, sometimes slowly, but

always relentlessly through history. As it glides along it affects and changes the terrain, but the terrain also affects it. The stream is colored by the minds through which it is funneled. It picks up sediment. This does not affect the truth but it does affect our approach to it and our comprehension of it. It does demand that there be periodic reformations in which the waste matter can be filtered out and the water purified.

It must not be forgotten, however, that those who seek to do the straining are also caught up in the human predicament. They are subject to errors in judgment, to personal preferences, and to pride of attainment as were many of their ancestors whose mistakes they seek to correct. Almost every movement known to me, forgetting extraneous matters which have influenced its thought patterns, begins to think it has arrived while everyone else is still departing. It feels that it has truth in its cage and congratulates itself that no one else has access to this rare and untamed specimen. The movement may awaken some morning to learn that it was mistaken in identification and has been feeding and nurturing something else all of the time.

I rather think this is one of the myths plaguing “the restoration movement.” It began at a certain time in history, in a specific part of the world, among those who were a frontier people. Most of them were kind, considerate and compassionate. They were hospitable. The latchstring hung on the outside. Some of them were grossly ignorant but this was no fault of their own. Most everyone else was in the same flatboat as themselves. It was a natural consequence for them to assume that their will was God’s will, and that God had said what they came to understand that he meant by what he said. There would probably be no particular harm ensue if they had been a little more modest but they felt called upon to take the platform and vigorously denounce everyone who did not share their views and who resented their playing God with the lives of others.

While I am a little reluctant to open this kind of a can of

worms, I think that a good case can be made that, morally and ethically, “the restoration movement” as we know it, is not so much a revival of God’s revelation as it is a reflection of the Puritan, rural and southern cultures which have influenced it far beyond its willingness to admit. As a youngster I recall how restricted life was for us. Confusing the Jewish sabbath with the first day of the week, we were forbidden to participate in any innocent game on Sunday afternoon. No dominoes. No checkers. No baseball. No basketball. No nothing! We were continually bombarded with such misapplied scriptures as “Shun the very appearance of evil.” I came to appreciate what Thomas Babington Macauley had written, “The Puritans hated bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the spectators.” I also agreed that the Puritans celebrated Thanksgiving because they were delivered from the Indians; we celebrate it because we were delivered from the Pilgrims.

Our brethren had no qualm about threatening everyone with perdition who attended a movie. This tactic did not make better disciples but it did serve to make bigger hypocrites. Lurid tracts were passed out entitled, “From Hollywood to Hell.” It was made to appear that the apostles, who never saw a movie camera, or any other, for that matter, had them in mind by extension in a number of statements they made. Apparently they excluded the use of tobacco because many of the preachers who came down hardest on the foibles of the age carried a plug of Brown Mule and took a pretty good cut of it as soon as they got down from behind the sacred desk. Apparently they did not taste it because “Touch not, taste not, handle not” was the passage frequently quoted and just as often misapplied.

The rustic influence was manifested in our anti-intellectual status. Fifty years ago we were afraid of someone who went away and secured a higher education. We had not yet heard of the Communists and we had to be afraid of someone. Many of us went to one-room schoolhouses, some constructed of logs.

Frequently the same building doubled for the holding of religious meetings on Sunday. We were pretty crude. We thought the best board of education was a pine shingle applied to the seat of the difficulty. If a person went away to college and got a degree we said he would lead the church to hell by *degrees*. If he used good English we accused him of “putting on airs,” and said he was “getting too big for his breeches.”

The same spirit was manifested in the preoccupation with the length of women’s dresses and the height of their shoe heels. Modesty was not so much restraint by a sense of propriety as it was limitation enforced by preachers. It was a man’s world and man ruled it with an iron hand and roughshod. I shall never forget my father (bless his memory) and other preachers likening women who cut their hair to streetwalkers and “chippies” (our vernacular for prostitutes). It was difficult to make the slow transition from a rural culture to an urban one.

When we began to get water in our homes and it was suggested that we put in a baptistery a good many people actually gave up and quit the church rather than sanction the sacred rite performed in a box under the pulpit. I have cut the ice many times and immersed people who stood shivering on the bank in their wet clothing with teeth chattering and beating out a tattoo to the song “Happy Day” which was always sung after a baptism to make it official.

Science does not stand still. It continues to work and investigate and invent new things even if all the Christians on earth stand wringing their hands in desperation. The radio came into being and we were against it. We searched the scriptures to find why and we found passages that we could use against it. Then came television. Men stood in the pulpits and condemned it as the way that Satan had of invading our homes. People were urged to throw the rascal out if they had already purchased one. Some factions gave those whom they immersed thirty days to cast their set to the moles and the bats or be withdrawn from.

What we did not realize was that all of these are neutral in and of themselves. It is the heart of man which determines how they are used. They are like a knife which is powerless to do anything good or evil because it does not have volition. But in the hands of one person it can be used to slice ham; while in the hands of another it is used to stab his neighbor. Those who are members of the restoration movement are like thousands of others. They are victims of their past. They need to realize this and become more charitable toward others. We have not yet learned all we need to know about God's will for us.

Myths of the Restoration Movement (5)

Restoration Review 7 (September 1982): 336

Restoration Review

There is a kind of just retribution which providence assesses against those who make the tragic error of thinking that they alone are the objects of God's real love while all other believers are rejected. They can never know real peace or serenity. They must always be nervous and distraught for fear there is some point at which they are remiss. This causes them to be upset and irritable with others to whom they project their own insecurities and doubts. Too, they are troubled, if they are really committed to their sectarian stance, by the fact that they can never wholly free themselves from dependence upon those whom they have already condemned to eternal destruction.

Let me illustrate. The very Bible which has become hallowed to some segments of the "Church of Christ" was produced by forty-seven scholars commissioned by a King of England. It is a revised version as it plainly says on the flyleaf "Translated out of the original tongues and with the former translations diligently compared and revised." It was called the authorized version because it was authorized to be read in the Anglican Churches. It would do a great many people good to read the superscription addressed "To the most high and mighty Prince, James, by the grace of God the King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the faith, etc." It was written

by Miles Smith, and appeared in the front of the version until a few years ago.

If John Overall or Andrew Downes came to one of our meetings they would be ignored. Certainly they would not be called upon to read the scripture lesson. But had it not have been for them and their forty-five colleagues among the translators no one else might read it either. We owe more than we can ever pay to these scholarly men from Westminster and Oxford whose work was first published in long ago 1611. Yet, if Michael Greene or John R. W. Stott, from the Church of England today came among us we could not call upon them to lead in prayer. As a matter-of-fact, Reuel Lemmons got called upon the carpet for asking a Christian Church brother to pray at a meeting in Texas. This shows how ridiculous we have become.

We face the same problem with the hymns we sing. Those who composed them in honor of God and Christ were good enough that we can borrow their compositions, but they were not good enough to lead them if they visited us. We can bear down on “There Is A Fountain Filled With Blood,” and can thrill to its pulsations but if William Cowper were here and came among us we would be uncomfortable and as cold toward him as the top shelf of our refrigerator. “Amazing Grace,” written by John Newton, a good friend of Cowper, is sung in every congregation I know, and song leaders and preacher alike have commended it, but if Newton showed up we could not ask him to lead us in it. He is not of us. It is a little like stealing tomatoes from a neighbor’s garden and refusing to invite him to eat with us when he comes to visit us.

Even more absurd is our practice when we are holding a “gospel meeting” which may consist of lecturing on everything except the Good News. We print broadsides and brochures which we deliver from door to door, and in which we exhort our neighbors to “Come worship with us.” On practically everyone of them occurs the statement “Everyone welcome.” Anyone who

believes that is gullible indeed. You are welcome only if you come prepared to swallow without question what has been prepared and is poked down your throat. If you start questioning some of the suppositions the folk will gather around to bait and heckle you, with three or four speaking at once, I know, because I have been to a number of meetings when it turned out that “Everyone welcome” meant everyone but me.

Some of our sectarian antics are a little laughable. If a Christian Church preacher attends one of our meetings the ushers run halfway across the auditorium to escort him to a seat, hand him a songbook open to the proper place, and point to the verse the congregation is singing, as if he could not find it for himself. But to call upon him to lead in prayer would be a no-no. That’s one place that “Come worship with us” is canceled out hurriedly. He can sing a prayer but he cannot say one. If it is set to music it is alright. If not, just forget it!

What makes otherwise good neighbors and excellent people engage in such childish shenanigans? The answer is quite simple. They are operating on false premises. They have been led to believe that the way to please God is to mistreat His other children. Their way to demonstrate loyalty to God is by acting despicably toward others who also profess to love Him. Actually, the very opposite is the case. Fortunately those who have begun to think for themselves and are divesting themselves of the “herd mentality” are fast outgrowing such behavior. They no longer confuse the “law of the pack” with the “love of the flock.” Such development is on an ever-ascending scale. The more who get their eyes opened the fewer there will be who prefer to walk in the shadows. Let me detail briefly some of the wrong concepts which have governed us.

1. Fellowship is conditioned upon agreement. It is not requisite for agreement but the very opposite. We are not in the fellowship because we agree but because we are in the fellowship we strive to come into agreement. Every commandment to be

one, to speak the same things, and to see things alike was given to those who were already in the fellowship. Not one was given to bring men into it. Faith in Jesus is essential to fellowship.

2. Conformity in knowledge is essential to working together in Jesus and uniformity of opinion is necessary to our walking together in the Spirit. The apostolic teaching is that knowledge puffs up while love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1). The entire fourteenth chapter of Romans was written to tell us how to get along with brethren with whom we differ.

3. Recognition of the relationship with one in Christ means approval of every idea he espouses. We need to remember that tolerance is not the endorsement of any thing that is wrong, but the endurance of one who thinks it is right. Jesus did not receive us because we were right on everything and will not reject us because we are mistaken about some things. If one is right about Jesus he can be wrong about a lot of other things and still be saved; if he is wrong about Jesus, he can be right about everything else and still be lost.

4. A false teacher is a mistaken brother who expresses his notions. The term "false teacher" is found but once in the sacred scriptures (2 Peter 2:1). He is scripturally identified as one who "through covetousness shall with feigned words make merchandise of others." The idea conveyed by "pseudo" is that of falsity, misleading or lying, and doing so knowingly. But one can be honestly mistaken and most people who are branded as "false teachers" are. They are not deliberately lying and one is not condoning a lie when he recognizes as a brother one who states his opinion or deduction.

5. Because disciples are to judge the world we are entitled to act as a judiciary to condemn every other believer who disagrees with us about any doctrinal matter. No so. The fact is that Jesus teaches that we shall be judged with the judgment with which we judge others. If we demand that another

understand everything just as we do then we shall have to understand everything just as Jesus does. We will be laid beside Him to be measured by the same yardstick we have used upon others. There will thus be no chance for any of us.

So it is no wonder that we are a jittery people and that we bluster about our righteousness to cover up our fears. Let us try to cultivate the one virtue which fulfills the whole law. Every commandment is taken care of by the one precept to “love your neighbor as yourself.” Unfortunately, we have not become known as a particularly compassionate, understanding and forgiving people toward each other, but it is not too late to undo our mistakes.

Myths of the Restoration Movement (6)

Restoration Review 9 (November 1982): 374

Restoration Review

One of the most unscholarly bits of fiction current among preachers of “The Church of Christ” in our day, is that there is no difference between the gospel of Christ and the apostolic doctrine. This leads to a kind of reasoning which often borders on the ridiculous. And it crops up in the most unexpected places. Before me, as I write, lies a sermon outline of a fairly well-known preacher, a graduate of Abilene Christian University. He was attempting to prove that the term “perfect” in 1 Corinthians 13:10 referred to the completion of the sacred canon of the new covenant scriptures. This was his answer to those who believe in miraculous demonstrations and phenomena in our day. He said, “We must not forget that the gospel had not been completed yet.”

Unless we want to be caught up in grave error we had better forget it. The gospel is the good news of what God has done for sinful man that man could not do for himself. It is the account of a person who emptied himself, took the form of a servant, and was born in the likeness of man. It is the story of one whom God made “our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and redemption.” Christ is the gospel, and the gospel is Christ. The news about Jesus is the good news. And it was fully, completely, and perfectly proclaimed upon the first

Pentecost after His resurrection. It was perfectly accepted on that day also. Not another word has been added to the gospel since that day.

The gospel consists of facts about Jesus. There are seven of these. They are His life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation and glorification. All these were made credible by acts of divine power which made them believable. The response to them is faith. Together they merge into the greatest proposition of truth ever to challenge finite minds— that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Anyone who heralds these facts has announced the gospel, anyone who accepts them without quibble has believed the gospel.

The gospel is God's message to the world. It is to be preached to all the world, to all nations. It was for those who were aliens. It was to enlist them as citizens. It was for enemies. It was to enroll them as friends of God. It was not for those who were disciples. It was to make disciples. Nowhere was the gospel ever preached to a congregation of saints. They had already heard and accepted it. That's what made them saints. The gospel was the seed, or sperm, from which we were begotten (1 Peter 1:23). The doctrine is the bread upon which the children feed. Response to the gospel is a one-time experience. It is like begetting or conception. Obedience to the doctrine is a progressive situation. It lasts a lifetime and will be going on when death occurs.

Two centuries ago this seems to have been more clearly understood than it is now. Dr. George Campbell, of Aberdeen, wrote about it in his *Dissertations on the Gospels* in 1788. Dr. James Macknight wrote about it in his *Commentary on the Epistles* in 1795. Alexander Campbell saw the distinction between the gospel and doctrine and repeatedly stated it in his journals. Indeed, he said that until this difference was clearly understood there could never be a reformation worth the name. He knew that we could never unite all of the Christians on their

varied opinions of the doctrine. Why, then, do preachers of our day scoff at the distinction, ridicule it, and often even label it as heresy?

With no intent of seeking to accuse unjustly, I would like to suggest that it is because they have something to defend. Let us face the fact. “The Church of Christ” has become a legalistic institution. In this they share honors with the Roman Catholic Church. The plain truth is that they believe in a humanly devised system of salvation by works. They actually make faith a work. And when one calls attention to the fact that “By grace are you saved through faith,” they quickly, adroitly and cleverly manipulate the scriptures until they make the grace of God merely another way of saying we are saved by what we do, rather than by what is done for us or to us.

To justify such a “scheme of redemption” they must confuse gospel and doctrine. It is in response to the gospel we are saved. If the gospel includes everything in the new covenant scriptures, we must know it all and respond in obedience to it all, or be cast into the lake of fire. Such a written code of laws has no power to save if that result is achieved by acceptance of a person. Obedience grows out of such acceptance, rather than acceptance growing out of such obedience. Our lifestyle is changed because of a completely new relationship to one who knew no sin. It is love for Him that makes us want to imitate Him as our pattern. We are not saved because we work, we work because we are saved. This places the merit upon the atoning blood of one we love, rather than upon our deeds done by law.

It is not gaining recognition that counts. It is gaining Christ. “For his sake I have thrown everything away; I consider it all as mere garbage, so that I may gain Christ and be completely united with him. I no longer have a righteousness of my own, the kind that is gained by obeying the Law. I now have the righteousness that is given through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God and is based on faith.” We

must choose between throwing everything away or keeping some of our antiques. We must realize that we cannot throw ourselves at his feet with our arms laden with garbage. We must early on determine whether we will be governed by the law of love or by our love of law. We cannot cling to both.

It is really sectarian pride, coupled with the tradition of the elders, which makes a people perpetuate an idea with no scriptural warrant. The basis of all sectarianism is fear. There never was a separate party erected except on that foundation, or motivated except by that feeling. We are frightened by the very thought of turning loose of a dogma which has become hallowed by long years. We are fearful of the consequences upon our partisan principles. But the real lover of truth will hold to nothing which does not commend itself to his integrity or veracity. In full dependence upon God, he cuts himself loose from all moorings contrived by man and sets himself free in Christ to be led of the Spirit. That is what faith and trust are all about.

One who has embraced Him whose person is “the way, the truth, and the life,” by that initial step makes a covenant that He will accept all truth as it becomes known and available unto him. The word of truth has been given by God, the truth of that word can be received with assurance. But the *truths* of that word are not all known to any of us. He who will be true to God will embrace each of them as he learns them. Before learning them he cannot be expected to do so. And even after learning them he must be given time to absorb and assimilate them. Involuntary ignorance may be a handicap, but it is no sin. Voluntary ignorance always is. What one could learn and refuses to will haunt him.

If the religious world can capture the concept of the gospel as the news about a person and see in that person the bridge between earth and heaven, there is hope in our generation for the beginning of that unity for which Jesus prayed. Our hope

does not lie in our conformity to a code, our perception of precepts or in our loyalty to laws. It centers in our vital relationship to the Christ in whom all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell. It is in Him we live and move and have our being. Unlearned peasants, illiterate barbarians and ignorant tribesmen can, on this ground, be received. We can welcome them as brothers. They can never find their way if it requires a knowledge of all the subtleties of doctors of theology or the explanation of abstract doctrine by erudite professors of the schools. And in Christ there is “neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free man, but Christ is all, and in all.” Christ is all! Ponder that carefully.

Renewal Through Recovery (1)

Restoration Review 1 (January 1983): 11

Restoration Review

We tend too frequently to speak in the outmoded language of yesterday. This acts as a barrier to our communication with those whom we would reach, and whose lives we would affect. Few there are who understand what we mean when we use such words as “propitiation” or “reconciliation.” But these have become hallowed to us because they appear in the King James Version, a translation which came into existence in the year 1611 and was authorized to be read in the Church of England. And any other version than the King James, or its revision of 1901 is immediately suspect. It will be subjected to every kind of nit-picking criticism by brethren who propose to sit in judgment, not only upon the product, but upon the scholarship of the producers. Every living language changes as does every living organism.

We are continually talking in revered tones about “the restoration movement” as if Jesus had died for it and heaven had adopted it as the nineteenth century alternative to the church of our Lord purchased with his own blood. The fact is, of course, that it was a movement in history begun by men, carried on by men, and eventually torpedoed and sunk by men. We know who started it and when. We also know who scuttled it and when. It began as a noble experiment. It has ended up as an ignoble expedient. It never affected the world as it could have done. Today it lies bruised, battered and beaten. It has suffered

abuse from its own proponents. It lies divided and fragmented by action of those who compose it. It is generally ignored by those who do not.

It accumulated all the trappings of the sects about it. I could designate them if called upon to do so. In reality, it developed four or five sets of these. It still trots them out at every opportunity. They are used to promote and encourage the rivalry which has characterized those who compose the movement that has ceased to move, and has become more interested in promoting parties than in proposing peace. Like every other human movement it has grown old and senility has fastened upon it because of its traditions. This worries a great many. I am not one of them.

I have long since distinguished between the body of Christ which was set in motion in Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago, and the restoration movement begun by men in America in the early part of the nineteenth century. If the latter breathes its last gasp and expires it will have no appreciable effect upon the former. The world has ceased to talk or think about restoration in our day. I can understand that. It has been led down so many devious trails by "restorers" and sold so many bills of goods by promoters that it has sat down in the middle of the road and refuses to budge. The church is looking for renewal. Words such as restoration and reformation have lost their meaning and forfeited their validity and integrity.

I grant you that the movement toward renewal will be like other movements. One day it also will become outdated. It will be supplanted by something else. Ever so often there is a stirring in the mulberry trees of men's souls. There comes a great awakening. A movement begins and touches even obscure lives. No one knows how or why it happens, because it originates with the Spirit of God. Men do not begin revivals. They are caught up in them. God begins them. Men give form to them. They order them. They name them. But the rivulets which run together to

make the river, and the freshets which combine flow through channels which God opens up.

The men whom God selects are strange men. They have to be. They would not be selected by their fellows. The criteria are different. Frequently they have been rejected, driven out, harassed and persecuted. Witness Thomas Campbell. If he had not been unfrocked by the Presbyterians the “Declaration and Address” would never have seen the light of day. Every reform that has ever happened was brought about by a heretic. Do not expect a significant movement to begin with “great preachers.” They are too busy erecting glass cathedrals or begging for a million dollars to finance a television production. God chooses the base things of the world, the things that are not.

It is high time for another breakthrough of the Spirit. All over this shrinking globe things are happening which seem to indicate its coming. Call it restoration, or reformation, or renewal—or whatever—but get out of its way and let it happen. Clear a way in the desert for our God. Fill every valley. Level every mountain. Let the hills become a plain. Let the rough country become smooth. Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed. All mankind will see it. Renewal! “Those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. They will rise on wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not grow faint.” God’s long distance runners! The heavenly joggers!

God does not want his people lazing around, merely going to meetings and listening to canned sermons. He wants them all, everyone, to be living sermons. We’ve got the whole thing out of kilter. It is all screwed up. One man gets all of the exercise and the rest of us sit and watch and pay. We also go to sleep. Instead of using the sword of the Spirit it has been converted into a fencing foil. Once every Sunday, and twice if we are “faithful,” we gather to watch a fencing exhibition against an opponent who is not present. We assail Jehovah’s Witnesses in absentia. While

we are doing that they are out lining up people and growing like crabgrass. We are spectators at a sacred wrestling match where a glib speaker ties an opponent, who is absent, into knots. We wrestle against flesh and blood. Why do we act this way. The reason is simple. It pampers the pride of the speaker and the ease of the beholders.

We need to be renewed. We are not soaring on wings like eagles. We are like fledglings afraid to leave the nest. And some of us have been in it for forty years. Even our pin feathers are undeveloped. We are like chickens with their wings clipped. We cannot even fly over the wall which encloses us. Let there be a new movement to unite the saints and let it begin with us. Renewal through recovery— of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. That will be our watchword. Print it on our banners. Fly it from our flag poles. Write it on our hearts. Engrave it upon our foreheads.

Let every footsore and weary pilgrim, slogging along the road, take heart. Let every youth who has become disillusioned and depressed find new meaning for his life. Let the churches reflect it. Let the lives of all rejoice in it. Let the messages repeat it. The body of Christians is not a human organization. It is a divine organism. Built into it is the power to renew itself. This is its heritage from its head who was dead and is alive again. So long as it recognizes and remains joined to the head it can recover its vitality and strength. We are Christ's body and each one is a part of it. The body is not composed of congregations or denominations but of individuals. God put the different parts in the body just as he wanted it to be. He put no non-functioning organs in it. He gave us no spare parts.

Always before when we have talked about renewal we have had in mind getting the clergy or the elders of a certain sect, or the alumni of a certain school, to get up and get going. But we are now talking about something which will affect every life, every man, woman, boy or girl on earth, who is joined to the

head, regardless of what kind of a theologically-contrived party he is affiliated with. All of us whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into one body, by the same Spirit. We must come to see that is true. The Spirit never baptized anyone into anything that is less than the body of Christ.

We have not time to debate and dilly-dally around. The little things which loomed so big yesterday are seen in their proper proportions when looked at through eyes of faith. It is now confrontation with the naked savageness of Sin. Let's get on with the battle and quit playing around.

Renewal Through Recovery (2)

Restoration Review 3 (March 1983): 54

Restoration Review

I think all of us know what we mean by renewal. It does not mean to create, to invent, or promote something new. It assumes the previous existence of the thing to be renewed. It also predicates the departure from the state which should be maintained, and the recovery or restoration of that condition. I have a friend who owns a grandfather's clock. It is an antique of many years. When he first inherited it, it would not run. The case was marred in several spots. But he renewed it. Once again it ticks until it disrupts your reading by day and disturbs your sleep at night.

The body of Christ has begun to show its age. That is peculiar because it is both ageless and timeless. It is the very embodiment of those who have eternal life. Unfortunately, those who have pledged themselves to be true to its head, have been seduced into taking their eyes off eternal life and to look at this world with more than a coy glance. They have been enticed to use the methods of the world. They have been lured into striving for success by the motif which animates so many. As a result they have erected rival buildings in choice spots, lavishing millions of dollars upon their own comfort which might have been used in better things. Caught up in the "cathedral-complex" they have pridefully sought to outdo one another and their rival steeples rise in every wealthy suburb as an indication of their "love for Jesus."

And the lives of many who perform what they call “acts of worship” at such places are as empty and devoid of consecration as the aisles and halls of the structures when the custodian turns out the lights and locks the heavy doors with their dead-bolts. It is essential that such lives be rescued from the useless round of making pilgrimages to holy places and engaging in vain and repetitious prayers. Singing four or five songs per week, and listening to a harangue about some theme will no longer pass for the Christian life. Our spirits have to be rekindled. Our hearts have to burn within us. We have to remove the bushel baskets from our lights. We have to long for good as a deer longs for a stream of cool water.

Now this transformation can only be wrought in us by the Holy Spirit. To be controlled by the Spirit results in life and peace. Where there is no Spirit there is no life. We have been betrayed by our mentors. They have convinced us that the only Spirit available for us today is the word. The more of the Bible we know the more the Spirit dwells in us. He who cannot read or write cannot have the Spirit. He who carries the Bible in his pocket has the Spirit in his jacket. It is time we put an end to this falsehood. It is just not true. It never was true. It has resulted in joyless, complaining, griping, unhappy and dissatisfied lives. It has also resulted in “double lives” as men have tried to live above themselves, and have always fallen victims of their own pretensions, landing on what the Word calls “the dunghill” of life.

We have also been flim-flammed into believing that the Spirit worked among the primitive saints, and later deserted them and left them to go it alone. So we have been condemned to go stumbling along, devoid of the Spirit and still trying to grasp and keep the peace that only the Spirit can produce and confer. There has never been a time when the family of God existed anywhere on this earth that the Spirit was absent from it. Each of us must possess the Spirit, live by the Spirit, and be guided by the Spirit, or we have had it. If we would be renewed we must

begin by asking God to fill us with the Spirit. There is no other way. It is either this or spiritual death—a slow, lingering, tortuous death from which there is no hope.

It is not enough for renewal that you have the Spirit, but the Spirit must have you! There is a difference. You must recognize that you are “sold out” to God. All you have, all you are, all you ever hope to be, are His. As the divine potter He can mould you at will. You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God. Your real life is Christ. You began all this with God’s Spirit. And you cannot complete it with the flesh. You cannot finish under your own power. You cannot wait for others. You have no right to expect of them what you are unwilling to risk yourself.

Renewal through recovery! Recovery has to do with that which has become lost. We recover a body from a stream, or a document from the files, or a diamond ring from the garbage can in which it was inadvertently dumped. One who is sick recovers his lost health. One who lost in a poor investment recovers the money which had “gone down the drain.” We must admit that we have lost some values of the faith or we will never reclaim them. So long as we mislead ourselves into believing that we have it made, that all who will be saved must come to us, we will continue our downward path to the end.

The fact is we have lost a great deal. And there is a lot we never had to start with. We are “seekers” and not squatters. We are explorers. We are pioneers. Our problem has been that what was recaptured in the past looked good to us. We thought it was all there was. So we bailed out and became settlers. We never should have done that. We are destined to be strangers and pilgrims. At the point where we settled is the place where our sectarianism began. We are only blazing the trail. We are clearing the way. We are running a race and not indulging our ease in a sedentary lifestyle. The word sedentary means “to sit.” We will have time for that when we reach heaven.

I do not want to take the time to detail all that we have lost or misplaced. It might surprise you if I did. But in subsequent articles I want to deal with matters of grave importance, the things that really make a difference. But right now let me mention that one of the most important things we have lost is a sense of the nature of the community of the saved ones. From the magnificent and splendid view given of it by inspiration we have reduced it to a minute clan.

Listen to this: “After this I looked and there was an enormous crowd—no one could count the people! They were from every race, tribe, nation and language, and they stood in front of the throne and of the Lamb, dressed in white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.” Whew! Isn’t that something? A multitude in which racial and ethnic overtones have all disappeared. Compare that with our puny little sects on earth composed of a few million at most. We can tell how many of each of them there are. Surely we shall need to enlarge our vision. The way the Lord counts people and the way we count them are two different things. Maybe we are looking at two different kingdoms.

All of our sects are man-made! Every one of them! That includes the one to which we belong also. God did not create a single one of them. He built no walls, erected no dams, put up no barriers to separate and segregate them. All of them began as “movements.” And all of the arguments over names are human arguments. Not a one of them is divine. They were all contrived. They grew out of the pressure of debate and human striving. The keen distinctions, the sharp arguments, the clever distinctions, all originated in the minds of theologians, men who were schooled to be lawyers for the defense instead of lovers of the defenseless.

And all of these obstructions are mere fantasies. They exist only in the minds of men. Faced up to realistically they dissolve into thin air. Only those who are sectarian can be barred by

them. One who is not sectarian goes through them as if they were mist. One who can see brethren on both sides of the fence is not inhibited by them. To him, “neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” One who is an inspector of circumcision can tell you how many are circumcised and how many are not. But one who is a new creation can tell you only how many were fashioned by God’s hand. We see what we are looking for!

Renewal Through Recovery (3)

Restoration Review 5 (May 1983): 92

Restoration Review

You will note that genuine renewal begins with proper respect for the apostles. It is renewal through recovery of the *apostolic* proclamation, purpose and power. This is the renewal for which we plead. No other will do for very obvious reasons. I hold no brief for the kind of teaching which assumes that the apostles were a group of antiquated fuddy-duddies whose teaching can be disregarded with impunity. The world has been led down a road of falsity by the infiltration of humanism and it stands a good chance of ending up in a bog or swamp where any attempt to extricate itself will only result in its sinking.

The one who was destined to be the king, called his disciples to him, and out of their number chose twelve. He gave them authority, not only over the forces of nature, but over the forces of the supernatural. He specified their mission, gave them their marching orders and sent them forth against an alien and hostile world. Later, he recognized that they had first belonged to the Father who had given them to him out of the world. He gave them the words which God had given him and they received them. He had kept them in the Father's name. They were not of the world even as he was not of the world.

I deplore four notions about the apostles which I consider to be flaky. One is that they were simply products of their age, and subject to all of the mistaken ideas which are associated

with any period. It is true they were in the world but they were not of it. They were not subject to the experiments, research and probing of their era, to test and arrive at truth. They were guided into all truth by the Spirit which was given them. All things that the Father had belonged to Jesus. And the Father took what was his and showed it to the envoys. Pay no attention to those who would try to sell you on the childish notion that the apostles did not know what they were talking about. No group of men could have produced the things they wrote without the inspiration of God. Any renewal worth the name begins and ends with the apostles.

Number two is the screwy idea that a special group of men, who like to dress like mother, and be called father, are successors of the apostles. This fabrication was dreamed up and developed in early times when men were simpler, to make it possible for the hierarchy to manipulate men by making pontifical pronouncements which hold about as much water as an old-fashioned sieve. The apostles had no successors because they finished their work. They were like Jesus. He finished his work and sat down upon his throne. The apostles finished theirs and also sat down upon twelve thrones. They are still there. Some of the “bulls” which have been delivered in recent years are aptly named.

Number three is the proliferation of apostles by various cults. The worst offenders consist of those who are followers of the deluded imposter of the last century, Joseph Smith. He claimed to have found some golden plates hidden under a tree near where he lived. His informer was the angel Moroni, a clever invention. The plates were accompanied by two “peep stones” which he called the Urim and the Thummim. His mother, Emma Smith, said that he translated the book of Mormon by putting the stones in his hat and looking into them. Thus, Mormonism has the distinct honor of being the only system which came into existence by someone talking through his hat.

There are several divisions in the Mormon Church. One is in Utah, two are in Independence, Missouri, another in Lamoni, Iowa. The one in Salt Lake City is the Church of the Latter Day Saints. One in Independence is known as the Reorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints. The Temple Lot group in Independence might be designated the Disorganized Church of the Latter Day Saints. I could tell you things about all three of them which would cause you to die laughing, but since we do not have too many readers anyhow, I will desist. But one thing they all have is their own twelve apostles. Periodically these issue solemn pronouncements, geared to the developing climate of our society, as if God suddenly learned what was going on and moved to correct some of his mistakes in the Book of Doctrines and Covenants. In Utah they think the twelve apostles in Independence are false apostles. In Independence they think the twelve in Utah are false apostles. I think it is about the only thing on which all of them are correct!

The fourth thing that bugs me is the idea some groups have that one result of “the great falling away” is the absence of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. They are the only ones left who understand the will of God. All others see through a glass darkly. So they are to hold on by the skin of their teeth as the last great hope of mankind. They are but another example of the spiritual elite who have found the key of knowledge lost by the fumble-fingers of past generations. One of these days God will restore all of these functionaries and the faithful few will be vindicated and will go marching by the remainder of us, cackling in glee because we thought we knew God’s word, when we did not. But I hold there will be no more apostles. The twelve were unique. They will never have another group to take their place.

The twelve apostles are in authority now. This very minute! To receive them is to receive Jesus. To hear them is the equivalent of hearing Jesus. To reject them is to reject our Lord. There is no question but what we have lost the burden of their

message. They were geared to the unity of all who believed in Jesus through their testimony. We have made a mockery and a farce out of that aim and ideal. Worse yet, we have given up on it. We do not believe it can happen. We must now revive it, or in this Space Age with its rampant and spreading unbelief, we will become so utterly pagan as to defy description. We must recapture their attitude, their motivation, and their spirit. Without these we will be powerless to weather the storm and withstand the gale which threatens us all.

Somehow, regardless of cost, or of suffering, tragedy and persecution, we must get the army of God marching again, and it must be against the foe and not in league with him. The twelve apostles knew that their primary relationship was with the unfailing Jesus and not with the fading word. They could distinguish between the wisdom from above and the wisdom of this passing age. And we must also learn this vital, stimulating, energizing truth. The apostles had one theme. They emphasized one person. He was the only one who could pardon from sin. He was the only one who could give purpose to life. He was the only one who could bring peace to a troubled soul. He was the only one who could provide power to conquer.

I suggest that all of my readers who have been troubled by fear of the lack of forgiveness, or by the drag of a purposeless life, or by a turbulent and riot-torn heart, or by a powerless existence, make a firm inner covenant right now to sit down and read carefully, deliberately and meditatively what the apostles wrote about Jesus. As his wish for your life becomes manifest, begin to implement the kind of life he would have you live. Your habits will change, your relationships will improve, your very life will take on new and deeper meaning. You can become a powerful force for transforming the world about you, God's nuclear bomb in the midst of a decadent social order.

God needs dedicated persons. He needs committed persons. He needs those who have experienced the power of the

purged life, who have been put through the eternal washer of the blood of Jesus, and cleansed by the only detergent which can do away with the black stain of transgression. That was what the apostles wrote about. These one-time fishermen, tax-collectors, and tentmakers, caught up in the Holy Spirit of God, penned for us the divine prescription for our condition. It came straight from the Great Physician who knows us better than we know ourselves. This is not only for the down-and-outers but also for the up-and-outers. It is for those in the poor ghetto but it is for the rich ghetto as well. It is for the one who never had a full meal and for the one who never missed one. It is for everyone. And it is for you. —139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121

Renewal Through Recovery (4)

Restoration Review 6 (June 1983): 116

Restoration Review

I doubt that even the most prejudiced clergyman among the Churches of Christ would credit Alan Richardson with writing something just to favor us. This eminent editor of the prestigious volume “A Theological Word Book of the Bible” makes a distinct difference between preaching and teaching. The Professor of Christian Theology at the University of Nottingham, he is well qualified to point out that this distinction existed in the Greek, and was manifested in the word *kerygma*, the thing preached, and in *didache*, the teaching. He says,

In The N. T. preaching has nothing to do with the delivery of sermons to the converted, which it usually means today, but always concerns the proclamation of “the good tidings of God” to the non-Christian world.

And this illustrates how elastic slogans can become and how they can be stretched. Our special one, which we tend to proclaim louder and longer than we do the Good News, is “We speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent.” One thing we certainly do not do is to speak *as* the Bible speaks. Actually we deliver sermons, another word not found in the Bible, upon any and every subject which rubs us the wrong way at the time, and call that “preaching the gospel.” We should be ashamed to live and afraid to die because of our actions.

It was not by accident that Jesus selected a word which meant to “proclaim as a herald” to indicate what the apostles were to do. The heralds were the broadcasters of the news in that day. They were the media men. Sometimes the news was good, sometimes it was bad. Battles were lost as well as won. So the blessed Holy Spirit came up with another word *euangelistes*, which always meant a message of glad tidings. It had to do with announcing what God had done for us that we could not do for ourselves. It informed us that the ransom had been paid and we were free at last. It told of the chain being broken and the liberation which followed. It was a message of victory, of triumph, of transcendent joy. It was all that humanity had ever dreamed of.

Jesus was the center of it. He was the way, the truth and the life. Those who were called, and who followed Him, were known as the people of the way. It was grand to see the demonstration of divine power which swept through them. As partakers of eternal life they demonstrated a new dimension of human existence. They willingly laid down their lives for the brethren. The world beheld a species of love never before exhibited. It cut through the red tape of politics, the black despair of immorality, and the gray shadow of death. Men were liberated thoroughly from the past. They became like a new creation. They were born again from above.

But it did not last very long. It never does. The great red dragon managed to dilute it effectively and to betray those who sought to follow Him. And he did it as he often does, by the application of cultural tradition. Three worlds converged and each one contributed its bit. The Roman world gave the structure, the organization and ended with the Establishment. Patterning after the pagan empire which had brought the world to its feet, and held sway and dominance over it, by raw colonialism, it stopped the fellowship in its tracks and reduced men to menial serfs in the organization.

The Greek world introduced its philosophy, which took its place as systematic theology. For generations the church, as the ekklesia began to be miscalled, argued and fought over Aristotelian views, and sought some way of synchronizing them with the revelation of God. As orthodoxy flourished, heretics were created as a spin-off and these were beheaded, burnt at the stake, and otherwise cruelly put to death. Frequently they were much nearer the truth than those who slew them in cold-blood.

The Jewish world gave its legalism, deadening, sterile and stifling. And the departure was complete. Conformity became the order of the day. Men were led to see certain magical qualities in the ordinances. Liturgy was substituted for life. Ritual took the place of redemption. Creeds displaced the Christ. A reformation was eventually attempted. But it borrowed the same old routine. Some say it stole it. It was dressed in new outward garb. But Luther argued with Zwingli about the Lord's Supper. Calvin gave his consent to the killing of Michael Servetus, the Spanish physician. The spirit of intolerance began to be manifested in new ways. But the one thing that made the ekklesia a world-conquering force was conspicuous by its absence.

That one fact was Jesus as *the center*. As men began to make other things the center of their allegiance they fell apart. The sectarian spirit became rife, not because men did not believe in Jesus, but because they were attracted by men, systems, doctrines, and things, which acted as magnets to draw them. Every major sect or party on earth today is such because it rallied around a creed. Every minor sect or party is such because it has emphasized some man, some system, some doctrine, some thing. Whether or not the creed states only the truth makes no difference. It is something other than the true center. And to lure men off center will divide them, fragment them, splinter them.

And to call any of these, or all of them, the gospel is to be

guilty of egregious error. To proclaim baptism, the Lord's Supper, some method of financing the proclamation of the gospel, a course of moral conduct, or anything else than Jesus, as the Good News is to deceive oneself and mislead those who accept what he says. Let me say again that what is said may be true, but it is not Him who is *the truth* and the *life*. Jesus is the gospel, just as He is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. For this reason it is said, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." Jesus is also eternal life manifested and one who knows the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, has eternal life. He may be wrong about many things, but he has eternal life. Eternal life does not consist of knowing the Bible, but of knowing Him.

It was here that all the reformers and restorationists of past days made their crucial error. They made the Bible, instead of Jesus, the center of their fellowship. Immediately this required knowledge of a Book rather than faith in a person as requisite to salvation. Since the degree of knowledge is always relative salvation was conceived to be unattainable. Those who were asked if they were saved began to say, "I hope to be," or "If God wills, I want to be." Jesus became lost in the Bible, the very Book in which were chronicled His life and mighty works in order that men might believe on Him. And he is still lost in the arguments and debates of the various schools of thought in the western world. The Bible itself becomes a source of divided families as witness the argument about "inerrancy of the scriptures." But fellowship with Christ existed before one word of the Bible was written. The ekklesia, called out by Christ, called together by His Spirit, and centered around Him through faith in His person was alive, vibrant and operating before a book or sentence of the new testament scripture was penned.

This does not mean that we can do without the Bible! Far from it! But we dare not make it our Savior! We are saved by a person. And just as in our homes we can distinguish between our wives and a cookbook, so Jesus can distinguish between his bride

and a guidebook. It is in our intimate surrender in union with Jesus that we become one Spirit with Him. And while we revere the Bible as containing a message from heaven we must never confuse it with Him who was “the Messenger” from on high. The faith is not a philosophy. It is not a written code of laws. It is not a compendium of systematic theology. It is man’s technical skills which produce all of these. It is rather a recognition of the man on the white horse, the “theos-logos” of God. Jesus, the conquering hero, is our theology. We must rescue Him from the Bible, just as we must rescue the Bible from the church where it has become lost in centuries of bickering, disputing and debate. We can achieve renewal by the apostolic proclamation. —139
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Renewal Through Recovery (5)

Restoration Review 7 (September 1983): 135

Restoration Review

The first time he sent them out is recorded in Matthew 10. There were twelve of them, men of different backgrounds and temperaments. They were rugged individualists. Some of them were fishermen. Some were caught up in the tangled political situation of the day. All of them needed training and discipline. They were issued stern orders. They were to take no money, no food collection bag, no extra clothing. They traveled light. It was enough for them to realize that “the disciple was to be like his teacher.” Their territory was limited and circumscribed. They were to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Many of them did not know they were sheep and most of them did not know they were lost. They resented the implication that they were.

The message was plain and direct. “The kingdom of heaven is at hand,” Matthew was a Jew. He knew the Jews rebelled at saying the name of God. It was too sacred, too holy. So he records that they were to proclaim the kingdom by its place of origin, rather than by its originator. They were to say nothing about the Messiah. They were simply to announce that the rule of heaven was near and growing nearer. But that was before he was granted full authority in heaven and on earth. It was before his betrayal by one of them, before his indescribable agony upon the cross, before his death and rising again.

When all of these things had occurred, and they were all connected with the coming of the kingdom, the orders changed. Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." Pause a moment with eyes closed. Think of the word "all" as used here. Let it strike a spark of fire in your consciousness. "All authority— all nations— all that I have commanded— always."

That message faithfully proclaimed can never fail. The promise connected with it is sure. It is certain. "I am with you always." It is a message, not of the kingdom, but of the king; not of the called, but of the caller. And it was first heralded in its fulness and perfection on the day of the cereal offering when the two loaves of bread were waved before the Lord. Everyone was hilarious with joy, praising the Lord, singing psalms, thankful for the harvest which had been theirs. Suddenly it happened. There came a sound from heaven. It was like the noise of a tornado. It filled the house and persisted. Split tongues of licking flame appeared. They rested upon each of them. The Holy Spirit filled them like waiting vessels. They began to speak in other tongues. The Spirit directed their utterance.

That is enough. You know the sequel. You remember that Peter stood up and addressed the cosmopolitan crowd. They represented seventeen nations, languages and tongues. He told them of Jesus whom God had attested with mighty works and signs. He told them of his death at the hands of a lawless mob. He pointed out that God had raised him up, and that the eleven were all witnesses. Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God. He had received from the Father the promise of the Spirit. He had poured him out and this is what they saw and heard. He finished with the stirring and impassioned plea, "let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made him both Lord and

Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

The effect was electrifying. The hearers were cut to the heart. They cried out to Peter and the other apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” That same day three thousand souls were added to them. They heeded the words of Peter to reform and be baptized. The ekklesia was born that day of the new covenant, the Jerusalem which is free and from above, and is the mother of us all. The kingdom which will never die and never be left to other people began, not with the clash of arms, or the screams of the mutilated and dying, but under the gentle and tender ministrations of the Spirit of God, the other Comforter sent down from above.

The ekklesia began with the proclamation of the Good News. The Good News that God had raised Jesus who had been crucified and made him both ruler and anointed Savior. It was the Good News of a person and what had happened to him, and it was also the news of what can happen to us because of it. The gospel (as the word has come to be called in the English tongue) was fully proclaimed that day. It was perfect and complete. Not another sentence was ever added to it. And it was fully accredited, accepted and obeyed. The idea of the gradual growth of the gospel as the church grew and advanced is a false one. It is dangerous as well. It really is destructive of all we hold dear.

If the gospel preached on Pentecost were a partial and an incomplete one, the ekklesia which sprung from it was also without some of its vital parts. That is just not true. The ekklesia, in its infancy was a body. And like any baby, it was in full possession of all of its parts and functions. It could begin to do what it was created to do. And now that we seek renewal and refreshing it can only come as we re-proclaim that original message. Under the influence of the Spirit of God let us herald the news of the resurrected Savior of men. Let us not be confused or confounded by a misplaced emphasis.

We can do incalculable injury to the family of God by inventing and emphasizing such other things as circumcision, eating of meats, or observation of days. Not only are they confusing but they detract from the message. The truth of the gospel, the central fact which makes it the Good News is justification by faith in Jesus. Anything which derogates that, which conceals it beneath excess verbiage or theological jargon, which obscures and befogs it, is not the gospel and can never be. We must determine not to know anything among the pagans of this day except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. It is this which is a real stumblingblock to much of our world, and foolishness to many of the rest. But to us who are saved, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

And while much of our world is looking for a sign as a demonstration of power, and the remainder is seeking to absorb the philosophic wisdom of this passing age, expressed in gobble-de-gook, we can do no better than to point men to the cross, stark and naked against the evening sky of history, deserted because he who was hanged on it has risen again. Perhaps if the people of God had not been led into the great scams of the ages, by clever manipulators who were quick-change artists, we might be closer to heaven's ideal than we are. But this is not time for weeping over what might have been.

Neither is it a time for vain contrasts with the days of the apostles. Are things worse with us than they were with Imperial Rome in the dark days of the Caesars? Yet, it was to them that Paul wrote, "Truth has been brought out into the open through the writings of the prophets, and by the command of the eternal God is made known to all nations, so that all men may believe and obey." We are proclaiming to the wrong people. We are talking to ourselves. Our message has turned from a proclamation to a recitation. Our dialogue has become a monologue. Our audiences have all become like sword-swallowers in the sideshow of a circus, taking in the weapon of the Spirit without even gulping. What about the black neighbors

down the street? What about the Chinese boat people who have come to our shores? Are they not a part of the “all nations”?

Are things worse today than they were in Corinth, with its open and licit prostitution, pornography and practice of magic? It was to them the apostle wrote, “The message about Christ has become so firmly established in you, that you have not failed to receive a single blessing, as you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.” Those who had wallowed in the slimy cesspools of sin, had been reclaimed, washed, sanctified, and redeemed. The proclamation of Jesus had come to them like a clap of thunder out of a clear, cloudless sky. That same message can come with the same effect today. The reason we do not see the effect is because we do not hear the message.

Renewal Through Recovery (6)

Restoration Review 9 (November 1983): 173

Restoration Review

The word “purpose” is from *pro*, before; and *ponero*, to place. It refers to that which one places before himself as a goal to be reached, or an aim to be accomplished. It represents his plan, his design, his intention for life. Without it he may spend years of erratic wandering, attempting everything and accomplishing little, if anything. There is an old saying that “He who follows two hares is sure to catch neither.” There is another proverb from other days, which goes, “The master of one trade will support a wife and seven children; the master of seven will not support himself.” One of the most heartbroken, disappointed kings the world has known was Joseph II of Austria. Chiseled on his tomb are the words: “Here lies a monarch who, with the best of intentions, never carried out a single plan.”

We decry the lack of artistry exhibited in many products today. One reason is that they are machine-made. But a machine has no mind. It cannot reason. It has no pride. It cannot stand back and admire what it has done. In olden times individuals inherited from father and grandfather the skills they employed. From earliest childhood they had worked at the shoemaker’s last, the pottery wheel, or the blacksmith’s forge. Their sweat, and sometimes their blood, went into the product. It was meticulously shaped and crafted, because not only the item, but the family was judged by it.

And that is one thing wrong with the community of the saved ones in our day. They have turned things over to the machine to run. They have little, if any personal interest in what happens. They are spectators, on-lookers, bystanders. More and more the manipulators turn the meetings into spectacles, going all out to present a highly organized, cleverly arranged performance with the preacher as ring-master, the conductor, the impresario. The Establishment takes care of everything. It hires, fires and regulates. All the members are expected to do is to show up for the exhibition, contribute as directed, and not rock the boat, or make waves by criticism.

Time was when honest tears flowed freely down furrowed cheeks when one was immersed into Jesus. Sometimes the entire audience was shaking with sobs of unrestrained joy. But no more. One does not weep when a new cog is fitted into a wheel, or a stray bolt is used as a replacement. It is not manly to cry in our culture. It is not womanly either. Paul, who warned the Ephesians three years, day and night with tears, would be dismissed today as a “sentimental old kook.” What is our problem? We have forfeited our purpose. We are letting empty buckets down into empty wells.

If we would seek renewal, and we had better seek it, if we expect to survive, we must recover what we have lost— our purpose, the apostolic purpose. Voltaire called the Frenchman La Harpe “an oven which was always heating, but never cooked anything.” We run frantically here and there, looking for this program or that, borrowing schemes, stealing ideas, appropriating methods, but never fitting them into a definite purpose. We must develop a strategy for the faith which is adapted to succeed. We are not playing around. God has not called us to a picnic.

What should our purpose be? Whatever it is, it must become an obsession, an overwhelming, breath-taking, life-shaking, way of life dedicated to the pursuit of the Holy Grail,

the search for the Golden Fleece, the hunt for the river of golden sands. Every other thing must somehow be fitted into it, every other feature must be related to it. The apostolic purpose was the divine one. It was the God-purpose. The Father made everything one in the cosmic creation. But Satan fragmented and splintered it, like a madman hurling a rock through a lovely mirror. God is not to be deterred from his place. Everything must again become a unit. He must be all in all.

In one paragraph in the “letter of the mystery” Paul defines his purpose in an outpouring of words which remind one of a dam bursting and releasing the pent-up waters. Listen! “For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to the purpose which he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” Have you ever heard a more all-embracing statement? Consider the words will, purpose and plan, and ponder their implications for the called-out of God. What is his will? What is his purpose? What is his plan? Will has to do with determination, purpose has to do with declaration, plan has to do with design. All three of them are directed toward the unity of all things.

This is not a human dream. It is not a fantasy. It did not come by rationalization but by revelation. He made it known. It originated in heaven and not on earth. It came from God and not from man. And it was made known in all wisdom and insight. It was not to be a noble experiment or a test tube case. It is not the result of a trial in a great laboratory. He is the only-wise God and his wisdom is behind it. He is insightful and all of his pragmatism is poured into it. That which was a mystery, unheard of, undreamed of yesterday, is a reality today. The mystery is made known.

That mystery made known has to do with his purpose. It is set forth in Christ. Until Jesus came and died the mystery was hidden and concealed. It could not be declared. Now it is seen to

be a plan for the fulness of time. Time is not eternity which never fills. It is a measure of life on earth. And when time reaches a certain point all things will be united.

How this will be brought about we do not know. What we do know is our part in it, and that part constitutes our purpose, as it did the purpose of the apostles. In the midst of a world set at odds by Satan we have lost that purpose. We no longer think of the “one body concept” except in conjunction with our specific sects.

No sect is the one body, and the one body is not a sect. The body is not a conglomerate of sects and all of the sects together do not constitute the body. The body is composed of individuals, working together, sharing in unison, functioning as a unit. And the achieving of that unanimity of purpose must be our purpose. If we can see each other as fraternal helpers through the eyes of love, rather than as rivals through the eyes of envy, we will set the stage for the unfolding of the drama of the ages. No one who truly believes that Jesus is the Son of God is an enemy of any other person who truly believes that. No such one is an enemy of God.

In the past we have been unable to sort our foes from our friends. The reason is because of our early training, environment and discipline. We have been taught to think sectarian. And one who thinks sectarian will be sectarian. Our exclusiveness, forced upon us, kept us from association with others on the spiritual level, and we have never been able to properly evaluate them upon that level. Because of our rural and small town heritage we were thrown together in school, in our home life, and in business. We came to appreciate the honesty, the sincerity, the uprightness of others. But they were members of “another church” and we did not associate with them on the level of the Spirit. We were aloof, isolated, and even sometimes downright rude. All of us recall relatives who put us to shame when it came to good works, but they were Baptists, Methodists, or members

of the Assembly of God. We coolly ignored them.

It will create a trauma for some of us to move toward the one body, composed of every saved person on earth. Fear will grip us. We will stand in dread of God's avenging wrath. That is because of the thorough "brain-washing" to which we have been subjected by Satan. He is afraid we will make it work. And I think we have him nervous now because of talking about it. Nothing else is quite as dangerous to the kingdom of darkness as the unity of the children of light. Satan will employ preachers to act as a "fifth column." They will use the age-old weapons of threat, boycott, pressure, and excommunication. But God's purpose, will, plan and pleasure will and must be accomplished. The eternal years of God are with us. Let us move out. Let us go forward!

Renewal Through Recovery (7)

Restoration Review 1 (January 1984): 216

Restoration Review

The greatest of the ancient scientists was Archimedes. He was born at Syracuse about 287 B.C. He had a head start because his father was Pheidias, the noted astronomer. Time would fail me to detail for our readers the successful experiments and discoveries of this brilliant man. One writer has said, "Almost intoxicated with the vision of power which he saw in the lever and pulley, Archimedes announced that if he had a fixed fulcrum to work with he could move anything." It is said of him that he announced, "Give me a place to stand on and I will move the earth."

Within three hundred years someone did just that. Using the "Rock of Ages" as a fulcrum and the Holy Spirit as a lever, the apostles moved the world. Without the use of eloquent wisdom, the rhetoric of the philosophers, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power, they sallied forth into the world of the Mediterranean. Millions of slaves existed in the Roman Empire. They were regarded as non-persons, as tools and machines, by the society of the day. Hopeless, they heard a message of hope; loveless, they heard a message of love; faithless, they responded to a message of faith. One of the apostles wrote about the call which penetrated their hearts, "Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were of noble birth, not many were powerful."

By the middle of the second century that was no longer the case. Philosophers began to embrace the message. The call was sounded out and heard in the groves and porches which constituted the schools of philosophy, it penetrated the consciousness of the lecturers and they embraced it. The deserter from the faith whose ambition it was to restore the old pagan gods, the emperor Julian the Apostate, first barred Christians from teaching, then barred their children from even attending public schools. He said, "It is bad enough to be shot down in full flight, but it is even worse when the arrows are tipped with feathers taken from our own wings."

By the middle of the third century it was all over. Two great ideas had met head-on. One had been forged on the battlefields of the world. It was wrought in agony and despair. It left behind a trail of battered cities, dying men and ravaged women. It was bred of savagery and lust. Its motto was "Might makes right." The other originated in the courts of heaven. It brought, healing, health and happiness. Its motto was "Right makes might." It took no lives, but freely gave them. The only blood it shed was the blood of its own proponents. But it had the power of the Spirit, brilliant, scintillating, penetrating, and the wisdom of this passing age was vanquished before it. No earthly might could resist its power— no army, no phalanx, no mass of marching men.

Today we look back upon the dewy freshness of the ekklesia. And we wonder what has happened. Let us wonder no more. It is apparent. The power has gone off. Not long ago we had a frightful storm sweep across our area. Wires were blown down. Clocks stopped. Refrigerators ceased to function. The lights were inoperable. The power was gone. Everything was still in place. The mechanical fixtures were still intact. But we were reduced to using candles which glowed feebly like fireflies through the murky gloom. That is what has happened to the called-out ones. Once they shown as lights in the world, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. They were like a

city on a hill, a beacon beckoning in every direction. Then the power went off.

It did not go all at once. It gradually ebbed away as other things than Jesus became the center. Everyone was still in position. They were going through the motions. They were singing songs, offering prayers, delivering homilies. But no one was listening. They were not even listening to themselves. Bible studies became diatribes. Prayer meetings were excused to do everything but pray. Blackness settled upon hearts. The works of the flesh became more manifest. Depression was felt. People dropped out and could give no reason except that their needs were not being met. And still the merry-go-round kept turning. It went ceaselessly on as if it knew no stopping. And that's where we are now. The world of mankind passes gaily on its way and leaves us mired in the sticky clay of indifference with our wheels spinning.

There is a solution. We must recapture the apostolic power. It was this which enabled men to look tyrants in the face without flinching, to face beatings which left their flesh hanging in strips and the bones exposed, to look death in the face as they confronted the whitened fangs and fetid breath of angry snarling beasts in the arena. It was this which enabled them to die daily. It was promised to them before "he went back to glory." He opened their minds to understand the scriptures, because the burden of that which is written is only understood by open minds. It can never be fully grasped by minds which are closed by tradition, selfishness or hatred. How he opened their minds we cannot tell, but we do know that he immediately said, "Thus it is written." And then he recounted again the fact of his death and its effect.

He told them that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached among the nations. Not just to the Jews, but to the Samaritans, the Romans, the Greeks, the barbarians. The preaching should begin at Jerusalem because that is where they

were. It should always begin where we are. Where we are is our Jerusalem. But it must never stop there, either with them or with us. Then he told them something very significant. I am not sure they fully understood it. I am not sure most of us fully understand it. “You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you, but stay in the city where you are until you are clothed with power from on high.”

They could not be witnesses until they had power from on high. There are two kinds of power. One kind everyone has. So Peter said, “Why do you stare at us as though by our own power we had made him walk?” Such power does not qualify one to be a witness of spiritual things. Natural events can be substantiated by natural power. Supernatural events require supernatural power. That is, power from on high. It is part of the promise of the Father. Men must wear it like a suit of clothes. It surrounds them. It keeps them from being naked.

At his ascension he said “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” A witness without power is an anomaly. But the divine dynamic, the exceeding energy which drove them into all the world of their day in spite of hardship and hunger, of pounding and persecution, of death and destruction, was from on high. It animated and vitalized the body. The flesh profited nothing. The thing that counted was the mission. And before they died they could take the words of the psalmist about the starry heavens, and appropriate them to themselves. “Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.”

This was not the result of their working in God. It was the result of God working in them. There are three passages in Ephesians which are pregnant with power. One is found in chapter 1, verse 19. “And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe, according to the working of his great might.” Three of the rich Greek words for power are

found in this tiny verse— dunamis, energeia, ischus— dynamic, energy and strength. They are immeasurable. Even in these days of computers they are still beyond us, still in the great “out there.” But they are actually resident in one who truly believes. Let your mind feast again upon the superlatives of this verse. They are available unto us.

The second is in chapter 3, verse 7. “Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God’s grace which was given me by the working of his power.” Notice again that this power is at work. It is seething, fermenting, driving, drawing, sending. And it provides grace as gift. We are not dispatched powerless as ministers of the gospel. The third is in chapter 3, verse 20. “Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly, than all we ask or think.” The power at work is not controlled, manipulated, regulated or governed by what we think. That power, in those who really believe, governs what we think.

Those who worship the power of the human mind can never admit that anything happens in them which they did not originate, or over which they exercise no control. These are the modern gnostics. They are true humanists and thousands of them profess to be Christians. But there is a power at work within us. It is immeasurable. It is great. It is mighty. It exceeds our ability to verbalize, to sermonize, or to put in words. It lies in a realm beyond our thought processes. It is “far more abundantly” able to provide a dynamic than we can ask, dream, envision, fantasize, or think. No wonder Jesus said, “I will not leave you orphans.” No wonder he declared that the other Counselor, would dwell with us, and be in us. Praise God for the Other Comforter.

Amsterdam Convention 1: Signs of the Times

Restoration Review 3 (March 1984): 254

Restoration Review

This is my account of the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists, held in Amsterdam, last July. It lasted ten days and drew four thousand evangelists. There were another thousand persons who were trained to serve as stewards, and interpreters, and who represented the press of the world. It was superbly organized and carried out without a visible hitch. Because I consider it to be of vital worth, this report will cover four installments. It will seek to evaluate the gathering upon the basis of its effect upon the contemporary religious scene.

The convention was divided into four parts, although not defined as such. These were motivational, instructional, practical and inspirational. They were translated into at least ten languages simultaneously. In some cases, an interpreter sat beside a man who spoke an isolated language and spoke softly to him. The first meeting consisted of a gathering of all attendants at 8:00 o'clock each morning. This was no small feat seeing that hundreds had never stayed in a hotel before and all had different sleeping and eating patterns. The meeting lasted for two hours. It featured eminent speakers and singers from all over the world. The second featured more than a hundred workshops by specialists in their fields. The third represented actual contact in evangelism with the Dutch people while the last brought in some

of the great names in evangelism in our day.

Because I am profoundly interested in the signs of the times and in the history of current events, I consider this gathering as the ninth in a series of phenomena indicating that the world is ripe for another reformation. Since the Amsterdam meeting ended I have seen the tenth event which betokens the approach of a tremendous new movement, which I have been pleased to call renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. The Amsterdam meeting lent impetus to all three of these, and did so in a unique fashion. It was interesting because few, if any, of the speakers knew that he was being used as a revolutionary by Him who rules in the heavens. It is possible that if some had realized it they might have declined the honor.

Perhaps, of as much value as the more formal meetings, were the informal gatherings when there were no meetings in the Great Hall. It was here I found myself most at home, talking with a score or more of men from every nation under heaven. There were scores of questions, and since I represented no sectarian institution I was as free to learn as I was to share. I came to believe more fully than I had ever believed that whatever God wants done can be better done by one who is a Christian only than by anyone else. I cultivated the habit of listening to souls anxious to talk about multitudinous problems. It paid off and is still doing so in the many letters I am receiving from Namibia, Zambia, South Africa, India, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, and other remote places on our globe.

In this article I want to describe one of the many morning sessions and tell why it was significant. I have chosen the final day. It was addressed by two men— Michael Green and Cliff Barrows. Michael Green lives at Oxford, England. He graduated with a degree from Oxford, and two from Cambridge. He is an interesting speaker and has a disarming little laugh that sounds almost boyish. His theme was “The Evangelist and Spiritual

Freshness of Life.” He was made for it. Following his speech he led a tremendously informative and helpful workshop. In it he dealt with some of the ways in which he handles the atheistic and agnostic students which crowd the halls of Oxford. I had read every book of his for several years. I finished his latest “The Day Death Died” just before embarking for the convention. I found it a remarkable study of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

Michael Green has four children, two sons and two daughters. One of them works in Watts, near Compton, California. He selected as the camping-ground for his talk 2 Corinthians 4. There are two gods mentioned here. The god of this world who blinded minds, and the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness. He pointed out that there are five things which keep one from being spiritually fresh. 1. Repetition, proceeding from laziness. It is easier to snack on what’s left than to go to the market for fresh fruit. He suggested changing the water on the bouquet. 2. Hypocrisy, which consists of pretending to be something one knows he is not. A wilted hypocrite is a wilted nothing.

3. Playing the prima donna. The seizing of the principal role and then playing it badly is one of the problems with preachers who are jealous or filled with rivalries. 4. Keeping up appearances. Men will sacrifice their families, friends, and even the church, for the plaudits of fawning sycophants. 5. Tampering with the gospel. Men who will not tamper with their car, the air conditioner, or any other piece of machinery, have no hesitation about tampering with the good news. It is frightening to wreck something so powerful.

To maintain freshness of life one must be tuned into life. Green suggested four kinds of life which keep one renewed. They are devotional, family, social and body life. He defined the latter as the body worshiping its head in mighty power. He pointed out that it is natural for an arm to receive nourishment, exercise and relaxation as a part of the body, and urged his

hearers to stay with the body. One is like a ticket stub “Not good if detached.”

A lovely young girl from Vietnam who had been blinded by shrapnel from an exploding bomb was led forward to the microphone where she sang a hymn which brought a burst of applause from the thousands in the auditorium. Then Cliff Barrows, who had directed the powerful singing in every session arose to speak on “The Evangelist and His Family.” He is the father of five children, with one son laboring in Nigeria. Paying a special tribute to Corrie ten Boom, he declared that he had been helped and inspired as much by this simple Dutch woman as by any person on earth.

He based his remarks on 1 Peter 3:7, stressing the phrases “heirs together,” “the grace of life,” and “your prayers be not hindered.” He affirmed that more preachers were ruined by “playing around” and by “sexual infidelity” than by any other bait which the devil placed on the trigger of his trap, and declared there were four steps to infidelity casualness, callousness, carelessness, and compromise. He declared that momentary gratification of the flesh was too great a price to pay for loss of eternal life.

Such teaching had been going on each morning for nine days. Notebooks were becoming full. Heads were becoming fuller. The morning break in which a sandwich was shared with a cup of Dutch coffee so strong it hit you like a lightning bolt was a kind of welcome respite. I would like just to mention a few other morning speakers who were quite impressive. There was Alfredo C. Smith, who was head of the Buenos Aires Bible Institute and who founded the Lima Encounter With God Project in 1976. He disagreed with Billy Graham on the need for large organized efforts and opted instead for one-on-one encounter.

He was preceded by Gottfried Osei-Mensah, executive

secretary for the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization. Formerly with the Nairobi Baptist Church, he quit his post to travel for the Pan African Fellowship of Evangelical Students. His theme was "The Evangelist's View of the Kingdom." The message was very informative and tremendously uplifting to all who heard it. Perhaps one of the most stirring messages was given by E. V. Hill, of the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Watts, California. It really turned the hearers on. Mr. Hill is a black preacher and he knows the art of building to a climax. He certainly did so in an address which will long be remembered by those who heard it. The morning sessions of the convention were all worthwhile. I wish you might have heard them. —139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121

Amsterdam Convention 2: Learning at Home and Abroad

Restoration Review 5 (May 1984): 291

Restoration Review

Before we ever left home to go to Amsterdam we were furnished a list of workshops which would be available to us. Each participant was to select seven. When we arrived we received a sheet showing our selections and the locations of each. There were about 110 in all but several of them required more than one room and several teachers. The instructors were to be experts in their various fields. All of the workshops given in English were translated simultaneously into Portuguese, French, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin Chinese, German, Spanish and Arabic, making ten languages in which each session of special interest was given.

The translators, who were very adept, occupied booths at the top of the seats in the rear of the auditorium. Each listener was furnished earphones connected to a little black container which he clamped on his coat. By turning a little dial he could easily arrive at the language he understood and could follow right along with the speaker. When I listened to the workshop in “Evangelistic Preaching Among Displaced Persons” I could easily understand the Russian, Yugoslavian, Czech and East German speakers. One of the interesting things to me was to meet men and women who could converse in as many as seven different tongues. There were many who spoke three languages

fluently.

There was hardly a theme I could think of which was not discussed. The workshops covered everything from the use of sophisticated media to the evangelist's study life, and his relationship to resistant people and to difficult areas. It was a hard task to select the seven that you wanted to participate in. The one on Buddhism was taught by Tissa Weerasingha, the one on Hindu by Anand Chaudhari of Rajasthan Bible Institute, the one on Jews by Susan Perlman, of Jews for Jesus; the one on Muslims by Dr. Akbar Abdul-Hagg. Even the names sounded as if they were made for the themes. I attended the one on Marxism which lasted almost three hours and featured sixteen men—everyone from the Metropolitan of Russian Orthodoxy, and the Patriarch of the Armenian Orthodox Church, to the Baptist leaders in places like Cuba and Yugoslavia. The first two were in direct contrast to the others. They were attired in robes hung with gold chains and other glittering ornaments. During the question period the exiles who were present and no longer afraid, held the feet of the prelates to the fire. It was interesting and informative.

Before I left home I prayed that I might be enlightened in at least two areas. Saint Louis is a university city. Last year I spent time at the International House at Washington University. One day I met a number of young engineering students. All of them were Muslims. I learned they were from Syria, Saudi Arabia and Oman. I felt at a distinct loss in trying to converse with them, although they all seemed anxious to talk. They spoke English rather fluently. I had never read the Koran, and knew little about its origin. I felt at some disadvantage.

Several years ago I was invited to speak at Washington University on a special occasion. The Student Communist League was holding a memorial service for the Chinese leader Mao Tsetung, who had recently died. The Christians on campus decided to take advantage of the opportunity. They posted a

number of notices advertising the difference between a dead leader and his little red book and the living Lord and his little black book. I was invited to be the speaker and to answer questions. The meeting hall was decidedly too small and was full for the occasion. At the time I resolved that I would learn more about Marxism, both as a theory and as a way of life.

It seemed to me that the International Convention was an answer to my longings, I would be thrown into the company of former Muslims and Marxists and I could learn what operated to cause them to change and to become Christians. By keeping my eyes and ears open I could learn a lot in a few days. With the increasing wealth of oil-rich nations there was a growing demand for young engineers and architects. I wanted to know why Marxism and the Muslim faith had spread so rapidly over so much of the earth's surface. They constituted foes we had to meet in hand-to-hand combat.

It turned out that my prayers were answered in ways that were beyond me. I had arranged for an aisle seat on the plane as usual. A young man of 35 sat next to me. Before we got off the ground I learned that he was bound for the Convention in Amsterdam. We were hardly under way until he confided in me that he was a college youth worker for Jesus, specializing in the Islamic Religion. He had been born in the Near east. He and his family now lived in Scotland. For several hours he talked and I listened. It was a course in just what I had prayed for and I wasn't even near Amsterdam yet.

To cap the climax one of the first persons I met in Amsterdam was a young man from near the Pakistani border in India. He had been reared in a Muslim home. He had learned about Jesus from a wandering native missionary, a man who held meetings in the open air because every place else was closed to him. He sat under a tree and told the young man about God's love as manifested in Jesus. It struck a responsive chord. The young man had been imprisoned and threatened with mutilation

and death because of his faith in our Lord. He told me that six people, including himself, were taking the message to villages and were being heard. He further told me that the other five were also at the convention. He found them and brought them to meet me. We visited several days and talked for hours. We asked questions of one another as though it was our last hope of learning. And all of the time I was regretting I had grown so old before we met. It was refreshing and stimulating.

I thought I learned something else from these men and others with whom I talked and that was that it was far better to learn from the lips of those who had experienced a thing personally than to learn by reading a book. One might gain a knowledge of doctrines and beliefs but these are always lived out in a cultural context. If we can learn about the culture as well as the pattern of belief we have gone a long way toward solving some of the difficulties of a changing way of life. It is not just minds that are altered by the Good News. That is why the convention was so precious to me. I resolved not to waste a minute of it but to contact someone every opportunity. It was easy to do.

The very first workshop I attended was very enlightening. It was titled "How To use Apologetics in a Non-Christian Religious Background." It was conducted by Dr. Ravi Zacharias, Director of the Chair of Evangelism and Contemporary Thought at Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, New York. Dr. Zacharias was born in India. He was thoroughly familiar with Hindu and Muslim thought patterns and was an authority on Buddhism. I listened to him for an hour, taking notes as he talked. He then received written questions from his audience. The burden of his talk was that apologetics could not be used in India as in America. One had to adapt his methods to suit the climate in which he was laboring, but one should never water down the word of the Lord.

I found myself profiting greatly from the seven workshops

which I selected and they were invaluable to me. One of them was on inner city evangelism. Oak Hill Chapel had just leased a storefront on a corner in the inner city before I went over. Perhaps it was the lectureship which emboldened eight of us to go on the street taking the gospel and handing out literature to those who came by. We were so thrilled by what we did that we resolved to do it every month. The reception we had gave us courage. The people we talked with were like hungry men and women being handed parcels of food.

Amsterdam Convention 3: The New Church

Restoration Review 7 (September 1984): 336

Restoration Review

For a long time I have known that the methods being used by the organized church to save people were helpless and wholly outdated in the Space Age. They were shot down in the 1960's by the counter-culture. To continue using them is like firing a bow and arrow at persons armed with nuclear weapons. So it was over four years ago I suggested to the folk at Oak Hill Chapel that we rent a storefront in the inner city and take to the streets with our message. They did so just two months before I left for Amsterdam. During that two months I personally rang six hundred doorbells. The first morning I encountered a man freed from prison the day before, I talked with a man of the streets who was homeless, talked about Jesus with two young prostitutes, and saw several scores of older men and women, typical of the forgotten people swallowed up in the gaping maw of a huge disinterested city.

When I arrived in Amsterdam I was fine-tuned for the work and it was ready and waiting for me. I was in one of the most overtly immoral cities on the face of the modern globe. I was walking to the convention center with a group of participants from Africa the very first day. I saw a young man with a liquor bottle in his hand, staggering all over the sidewalk. I told my companions that if he was there when I came back the

next day I was going to encounter him and tell him about Jesus. They suggested I had better not become involved. That night, going home, I saw him in the company of a couple of other fellows and three girls who were immodestly attired according to my standards. The police were talking to all of them so I passed on by.

But the next evening he was there with another bottle of liquor. I “peeled off” from my group and went over to him. He spoke English fluently. When I asked him about Jesus he told me he knew all about him. He had gone to a seminary for two years. He declared that Jesus was a fake. He thought he would get rid of me by using language that would have made a western mule-skinner flinch. But I hung in and presented the claims of Jesus. When he started to walk down the street I walked by his side. We came to the dive where they hung out and I started in.

He told me I could not enter but I went in anyway. I found myself in a place apparently used for vice. The pictures on the wall were the most filthily pornographic I had ever seen. Six mattresses were on the floor. Three young people who had been sitting in front of the place, got up and followed me in. I attempted to shame them and turned and walked out, but ever afterwards when I passed the place the door was closed. I saw the young former theological student three more times. He was always respectful and deferential.

I lost all fear and began to stop young people on the street and talk to them. Many of them shaved their heads except for a scalplock which they called a Mohawk. They died it red, yellow and blue. Some of them were skin-heads, openly asserting their rebellion. When I found three or four of them walking toward me in their skin-tight leather clothing. I stopped them and talked to them, always working it around to Jesus. They listened. Sometimes they would get off a smart remark but, fortunately, I could turn it to the Lord’s account. It was great to be a witness as to who Jesus was and what he could do. The young

brainwashed victims of the frightful “punk-rock” era heard of a love and an all-enveloping grace which they had never heard before.

On Thursday it was announced that we would attempt a penetration of the culture on Sunday, starting at noon. It was suggested that we leave our coats at home, wear no ties and unbutton the top button or two on our shirts. Sixty-four buses were lined up inside one of the convention center buildings. Beside each bus was stacked fifty box lunches. The buses were divided into red, yellow and blue. English-speaking people boarded the red, Spanish-speaking the yellow, and Far Eastern the blue. Those who spoke English were to testify on the beaches and in the resorts.

It was my good fortune to sit across from a young French Mennonite and his wife. He had been reared a nominal Catholic. After serving a term in the army he decided against war as having any possibility of settling international differences. I have heard from them twice since returning home and he is working with three small congregations numbering about twenty in French villages. We talked all the way to the battlefield where God was leading us. When the bus was several miles from the resort town and beach we encountered hundreds of cars parked four deep. The scene was a madhouse. We drove for several miles between vehicles crowded so compactly it was almost as if they were one. I have never before seen such a crowd.

A musical group had been sent about one hour in advance to soften up the people. They were all “Deutschlanders.” When I arrived they were singing in the native tongue and interspersing the songs with personal declarations of what Jesus meant. The singing group was composed of about twenty people of all ages from the very young to the very old. I listened to them about five minutes and then plunged into the teeming sea of people. Out of the corner of my eye I could see my bus companions, some of them talking earnestly to two or three people. We were

distributing copies of Good News by John, in the Dutch language, and urging people to read it for comfort and strength. It would be the first time many of them had been exposed to the word of the Lord.

I approached three people sitting on a bench looking out across the ocean waves. I asked them if either spoke English and found out that they could only “sprechen sie Deutsch.” I had my work cut out for me. By signs and an occasional word from my limited vocabulary I got through to them. They promised to read the book that night. I gave them two copies, and moved over to where eight people were sitting on a hotel porch enjoying the ocean breeze. I asked if anyone in the group spoke English. One man raised his hand. I asked him to interpret what I was going to say and began to speak. No sooner had I started than Satan interfered in the form of an aging dowager, who deliberately arose, took a stance directly between me and the interpreter and began to talk to him in a loud voice. I got only four of the people to accept a copy of the book.

I moved on to a set of steps where a young man and woman were sitting. I introduced myself and found they were from Haarlem, a few miles away. He was a house-painter but was unemployed. Conditions are bad in the Netherlands for the trades. I talked with them about fifteen minutes about Jesus. I have never found a more alert or inviting couple. They asked questions about the Way. We exchanged addresses and I moved on. Before me was a motorcycle gang from all over northern Europe. There were well over a hundred of them. All were dressed uniformly in black leather suits. I moved in among the Hondas and Suzukis and began to preach about Jesus in a conversational tone. They gathered around. I offered the books to anyone who would promise to read them. Five boys and girls reached out for them. I gave the books with a prayer and started walking down the street.

I had one copy of the Gospel of John remaining. I met two

women walking toward me, stopped them, told them what I was doing, and found that one of them was from Ireland. The other was her sister and lived in West Germany. They were awaiting their brother who would join them from France on the morrow. Exacting a promise from them to take turns reading the book I gave the last one to them and turned my steps toward where the bus was due to pick us up after three hours of absence while we were contacting people. It was a thrilling afternoon and I prayed on the bus and again that night for those whom I had met. I could hardly wait to get back to the United States and do the same thing here. —139 Signal Hill Dr., St. Louis 63121

Amsterdam Convention 4: What Was Accomplished

Restoration Review 9 (November 1984): 376

Restoration Review

I have been repeatedly asked, since returning from Amsterdam, what such a meeting could possibly accomplish. I sympathize with those who ask the question. Inevitably it comes from those who were not present. Often it is asked with a partisan axe to grind. I think we must face the fact that, like the generation contemporary with Jesus, many of us are blind and cannot see afar off. Long life and continuous drudgery in one of the more legalistic sects of this day, has blurred our vision and dimmed our sight until “we see men like trees walking.” We need “the second touch.” Surgery for the spiritual cataracts which cause a milky film across our minds would help. Because of my past orientation I also went with no little skepticism. It was all blown away after my arrival.

This was the first meeting of its kind in the history of the Way. Never before has there been a universal call for all evangelists to gather and pool their thinking about means and methods for the good of all. Various sects have had a state-wide and even nation-wide gatherings. But these were limited in scope. They were attended primarily by professionals who make their living by offering their skills to the highest bidder. At Amsterdam, a goodly percentage made their living from a trade, and proclaimed the Good News when and where they could in

groves, along the roadsides, or on village streets. Many who attended from Third World countries were invited to visit the Samaritan's Purse, where they were given an extra pair of trousers and a coat to provide a change from the one they wore to the conference.

The meeting also sustained a priority in that it was the first universal gathering centered solely around the *person* of Jesus Christ. And it was a mind-blowing experience. I have attended a number of lectureships, and have even participated in a few. But all of them betrayed their bias by the subjects discussed. There were speeches on Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Assembly of God theology. In many cases the talks narrowed down to restoration movement practices, and men held forth valiantly, with sweat streaming down their faces, on instrumental music, societies, Bible classes, or varied versions of the Bible, and what was wrong with all of them. At Amsterdam it was Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Secondary matters were placed on the shelf or left in the closet. The millennium, the rapture, the tribulation, and all the rest of the speculative basket of turkey eggs which television preachers toss back and forth at one another was not mentioned. One or two speakers predicted that the clock was running down and that we were in "the end times" but most everyone present was so interested in how to present the message to this generation, it did not particularly matter to them where we were on God's time yardstick.

The conference was held in the midst of one of the most immoral and secularistic populations on the face of the earth. It fairly shown by contrast. Churches were engaged in a struggle for survival. Many had long since been sold or torn down. The war has left an aftermath of horrific departure from the power of the gospel. The Nazi occupation with its cruelty and blood thirstiness had done its damage. The baser instincts of many surfaced with all the scum on them. In a metropolis where sex was openly flouted in a hundred evil ways, where it was open and overt young people grew up unable to determine right from

wrong. They grew up like fish in a polluted pool gasping for air.

But for ten days, like a refreshing breeze sent from heaven, the representatives at the convention brought a different lifestyle to the city. People saw, touched and heard delegates from 134 countries of the globe, courteous, polite, deferential, and they hardly knew what to make of it. I was walking toward the convention center one evening, just as the sun was setting. Two Arab men saw my identification badge. I greeted them warmly and they were emboldened to ask what the convention was all about. Deciding that it was more valuable to talk with them than to go listen to someone talk to me, I detoured, and sat down beside them. I told them the meetings were not about a *what* but about a *who*. It appeared incredible to them that one would come as far as had I on such a mission. I told them that Jesus had come a lot farther to visit and to rescue men, and that he was the only remedy for our ripped-off world.

Waxing bolder, I suggested there would never be permanent peace in the Near East until it realized that “In Christ there is no East or West” and drew near to Him. I learned that both of them were graduates of universities in Europe. When the time came to part we shook hands warmly. An hour had gone by. I have often wondered what became of them. I could easily have passed them by as did hundreds of others. They were like “ships that pass in the night.” It was a real pleasure to realize that we had been dropped like parachutists in the midst of a profligate city. We were to take what prisoners we could. We were there to batter down the strongholds. We were commandos for Christ.

I overheard several people talking about how hard and insensitive the populace was. They were supposed to be skeptical and cold. I must confess that I never encountered one bit of it. I talked to them on the streets, in the trams, in the stores and restaurants. I found nothing but friendliness and a desire to help. When I turned “my half of watermelon” smile on them,

inevitably they smiled back, our difference in cultures melted away and we found a common ground on which to stand. This was true of boys and girls of high school age as well as older burghers. It was great to be among them. I loved every minute of it. They were modern pagans but they were friendly pagans.

The history of the Netherlands goes way back when contrasted with our own new world existence. Amsterdam was founded about 1225, and was 550 years old when the American Revolution began. Canals divide it into 100 small islands, interlaced by more than 350 bridges. The age of some of them is staggering as seen from a canal boat while going beneath them. Almost the entire city is built upon a foundation of piles driven fifty feet into a stratum of clay. It is a unique and quaint city. Once it was a tremendous force to be reckoned with in conjunction with the spread of protestantism and the resistance to Roman aggression. The saga of the times of William the Silent is one to be proud of.

The Thirty Years War which was a religious struggle of frightening proportions, settled eventually by the Peace of Westphalia, virtually decimated the land. But it recovered and was the one-time headquarters for the Anabaptist Movement. It seems incredible that the one-time influential area in the realm of moral and spiritual worth could have departed so far from its original purposes. Perhaps the fact that the country played host to so many evangelists from throughout the world will cause it to do a twentieth-century right-about-face and resume a position of leadership in the world of faith.

None of us can doubt that the world of our day is crying out for leadership in the kingdom of heaven. America cannot provide it. Possessed of skills in science and technology she has diverted them to selfish interests. She is a leader in space conquest and in big business. She leads on the ground and in the skies but hardly in the heavenly trek. Those who are foremost in the field of communication have generally sought to advance

their own interests and to become wealthy at the expense of others. So-called “television evangelists” often fleece the flock. When one gets to the place he can no longer help he is dropped like a hot potato.

The Spirit can no longer penetrate the veneer which has been applied in the name of worship. In the reformation which stands at the door waiting for someone to let it come in, only those can be leaders who crucify self. It is in taking up the cross that one proves his worthiness. God’s will must be done and that nation which does it will be exalted. May the day hasten and come!

The Potato and the Bible

Restoration Review 2 (February 1985): 34

Restoration Review

The potato is pretty much a staple part of our diet in these days. With the proliferation of steak houses across the land we can drive in and gulp down a baked Idaho and a salad of our own construction and be on our way in twenty minutes. It was not always that easy. The potato, which is indigenous to the Peruvian Andes was brought to Europe in the sixteenth century. It created a sensation and was denounced from the pulpits of the land as a snare of Satan. Eminent divines argued that if God had meant for His people to eat potatoes he would have mentioned them somewhere within the pages of Holy Writ. In the absence of any such scriptural reference they were condemned by the silence of the scriptures.

This true account illustrates graphically the length to which men may go who make such a negative creed out of silence, and who argue that what God has not said is as authoritative as what He has said. It is one of the myths of the restoration movement which has managed to wield it so effectively that it has ended up with two dozen or more sects, each belaboring all the others as unfaithful and heretical. This points up the danger of adopting slogans as guidelines and substitutes for the revelation of God.

From the time I cut my eye-teeth on “restoration theology” I have been belabored with “We speak where the Bible speaks,

and remain silent where it is silent.” I am prepared to prove that we have been wrong on both counts, but right now I want to deal with the last one. It is part and parcel of the baggage we have lugged along on our journey through life without ever stopping long enough to see what was in our spiritual carpetbag. It is so vital to our existence as a separatist and exclusivist people that to call it in question is looked at in the same light as hurling a bomb at the New Jerusalem. I have been reproached with the plea, “Why don’t you keep still and let well enough alone?” This comes with poor grace from those who are notorious for gunning down everyone who disagrees with them. It is like a bully who terrorizes everyone in his path with threats and then cringes and whimpers when the police track him down and surround him.

We have repeatedly heard sermons and read articles on “the authority of silence.” In my earlier and younger days, before I knew better, I preached a few of them myself. I am ashamed of having done so and have asked God to forgive me. I now realize that there is no inherent authority in silence. There is no fixed, innate, or existent authority in what has not been said or spoken. I shall deal soon with the false concept that it is the authority of God which invests silence, but right now let me say that the only authority which adheres to it, is the authority of the one who makes the argument. It is impossible to interpret silence, for nothing has been said which has become possible of putting into intelligible or familiar words.

This brings me to the problem of remaining silent where the Bible is silent. I will not examine the validity of the slogan for human beings, whose minds are already filled with pre-conceived notions, prejudices and acquired ideas. It may be that the whole slogan represents a goal toward which we aspire, something to keep constantly before us. The view that we have attained it and are now practicing it is a myth which renders our work ineffective, especially when we postulate that we are the only believers on earth who are attempting to do so. We have arrived just as everyone else is departing!

We did not come to the faith with our minds in a vacuum. Thousands of impressions, some right, some wrong, have influenced our thinking. When we accept Jesus as Lord we do not turn our minds back to zero. We begin where we are, absorbing new and refreshing ideas, correcting and forsaking mistaken ones. Some among us are so-called original thinkers, others would not recognize an original thought if it sat up and barked in their faces. But we are all the children of God and there is room under the divine umbrella for us all. We must receive one another and not seek to manipulate each other.

The fact is we do not remain silent where God is silent. We talk too much. We deliver sermons, write books, engage in debates, become angry, form factions, and slice the body to shreds over what God meant when He did not say anything. What we do is fill in the blanks and try to get everyone else to fill them in just as we do. We supply the missing words. We do not remain silent. We remain talkative. What we really mean is that everyone else should remain silent where the Bible is silent, and not interrupt us while speaking where it has not spoken. Our problem is not so much thinking to pray as praying to think. We are driving people from us whom God loves. As fast as He calls them we cull them.

The slogan has become a mere debating tool. Like so many other catchwords it was devised or twisted to win battles. And all is fair in love and war. The word “slogan” is from the Gaelic. It referred originally to the war cry of a Highland clan. Anyone who has heard it knows how blood-curdling it can be. It will give you goose pimples as big as little marbles. It will make your flesh crawl and creep. And our adoption of the slogan was intended to frighten members of the Christian Churches or the Baptist Church until they would climb the nearest tree when they saw us approaching.

I doubt that the genial and affectionate Thomas Campbell realized, when he used the slogan that the time would come

when two dozen warring tribes would adopt it as their guide and ride forth to scalp each other with this rusty blade or bash in skulls with this tomahawk. Certainly he did not intend to use it as we have. To do so would have rendered his writing unnecessary. We have more sects than when he lived, and we have added a couple of dozen of our own, just to complicate matters a little further.

It cannot be denied that the use we make of silence is a very selective one. We preach it as though it were a God-given, all-embracing principle. But in our application of it we tread water like a shipwrecked sailor. If one mentions greeting the saints with a holy kiss we quickly label it as a custom geared to the culture. It is all right for Yasser Arafat on television but all wrong for us as Christians in the United States. The mere mention of foot washing gives us cold chills despite the words of Jesus that He gave us an example to do as He had done.

We are ready with a portfolio of arguments when someone points out that the scriptures are silent about the churches owning real estate. We have drummed up a series of reasonings which demonstrates it is right to do something for which we have neither command, necessary inference, or approved precedent. We have even developed huge financing organizations, great architectural firms, and church building complexes which will move in and erect a meetinghouse with the approved sign "Church of Christ" on it. But the word of God is absolutely mum about our huge temples of pride with their multiple rooms for this and that, including the preacher's office. Times have changed. Once we inveighed against stained glass windows, steeples on our edifices, and crosses on our buildings. But that was when we were a frontier people, unwept, unhonored and unsung. Since we have become accepted socially, and can even elect a man to Congress, things have changed.

All of this points up the shallowness of our arguments. The contention for the silence of the scriptures is not a scriptural one.

It is a myth to contend that it is. It is elastic enough to allow anything we want. It is restrictive enough to forbid anything we oppose. It is like a fence which keeps cattle in and allows hogs to go out. The content of the silence is dictated by the wish of the contender. David Lipscomb thought it was a sin to vote. Now a lot of folk think it is a sin not to do so.— 4420 Jamieson, Apt. 1C, St. Louis, MO 63109

“Silence of the Scriptures:” A Shopworn Myth

Restoration Review 5 (May 1985): 95

Restoration Review

One thing which protects most of our myths within the restoration movement is the inborn and irrational fear of what would happen to us if we surrendered them. So we conceal them beneath a camouflage fabric which may, in the end, prove more harmful to us than the myth. Let me provide you a good example related to the shopworn myth about “the authority of silence.”

When anyone questions it he is immediately bombarded with all of the things which will happen to us if it is repealed. Irresponsible individuals will introduce burning of incense, sprinkling of holy water, and phylacteries. G. K. Wallace once described a man coming to the assembly with a sheep draped over his shoulder to offer as a sacrifice. This was his method of combating the use of instrumental music in public praise. It is time to pose a few queries.

I have very serious doubts that all of the dire things predicted would be brought forward in “the restoration movement.” If they were it would be as the result of ignorance of our relationship to God under the new covenant. How are we to deal with such ignorance? We realize that only voluntary ignorance is a sin. Involuntary ignorance never is. What is the

remedy for ignorance? Is it the devising and imposing of pseudo-sacred laws such as “the authority of silence?” Is it not rather instruction in the way of the Lord more perfectly?

But suppose those who trust in such things refuse to be taught? We have done all we can do if we instruct them according to the revealed will. Learning is a slow process and requires much patience. I think it is this which motivates us to formulate creeds and to legislate rules. They circumvent the need to teach by drawing an arbitrary line of fellowship. We can then hibernate with those who agree with our opinions and are subject to our spiritual whims.

The early saints were bothered with such problems as eating of meats and keeping of certain days. It is interesting to remember that not once did the apostle Paul pull “the law of silence” upon them. The fact is that never once in the sacred scripture is this law, which has become so much a part of our vocabulary, ever mentioned. If it was one of the laws of God it was never invoked by one of his spokesmen. Circumcision was introduced and was one of the most divisive threats ever faced by the church of God. Paul dealt with it very simply by pointing out that “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision avails anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.” That would settle most of our divisive problems if we quoted it and believed in it.

The imposition of creeds has been the bane of the Christian faith. These simplistic approaches to communion of the saints are intended to cut through the red-tape and specify the will of God. Inevitably they have been divisive as men have refused to bend the knee or genuflect before them. The so-called “Authority of silence” is such a creed, dreamed up by a clerical caste and saddled upon the people of God. One of its chief sins is that it interposes itself between a man and his Lord. It subtly separates us from Jesus Christ. Instead of repairing to Him to learn the infinite truth He came to reveal, it forces us to study the distillations of “great men” among us to secure the formulae

by which to understand what the Perfect Teacher instructs us to believe.

The truth of heaven is eternal and boundless. Who could think of shutting it up in the few lines of an abstract creed, or confining it in a handful of propositions sifted out of the beautiful whole? As well might one try to bottle the rain which falls from the firmament, or can the snow which descends from the clouds. It would be like trying to capture the free winds which blow across the universe and separate them into properly labeled parcels. The faith of God cannot be reduced to a system by the finite minds of puny men. It cannot be defined and measured out as if it were a product of human manufacture. "The wind bloweth where it listeth."

Men seek to protect themselves from the thoughts of other men. They devise restricting ideas and pass them off as the will of God. By claiming the authority of heaven for their statements they seek to bend other free souls into conformity with their methods. But words are only rude hints of a Christian's mind. "Out of your bellies shall flow living water." And the rushing torrent cannot be confined or dammed by any generation. "The waters will overflow the hiding place, the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies." Instead of trying to control men by passing laws we should teach them to associate as free men under Jesus.

Recently, in correspondence with a brother, eminent within his sect, and highly regarded by thousands as a respected teacher, I asked him for a scripture which taught "the authority of silence." He cited only one. It was Hebrews 7:14. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood." I have thought about this arbitrary usage a great deal. Why did this man, who holds many meetings and professes to be a teacher of the unlearned resort to this passage. I am forced to the conclusion that it was merely because the words "spake nothing" occurred in it. He ignored the remote context and purpose of the entire letter, and the

proximate context of the chapter, and his eye fell on the expression “spake nothing.” Out of this thin filament he spun the tenuous thread that has disturbed saints, divided the church and destroyed unity.

We ought to be ashamed to live and afraid to die. We twist the scriptures to our own destruction. And we do it to uphold the traditions of our fathers who were often good but ignorant men living on the frontier. Was Christ not a priest under the law merely because Moses spake nothing of the tribe of Judah? Was it not rather because God said to Aaron, “You and your sons shall keep your priest’s office . . . and you shall serve . . . I have given your priest’s office unto you as a service of gift” (Numbers 18:7). Was it not because God had spoken rather than because of what he had not said, as Uzziah learned to his shame and his subsequent death? And was it not because God had designed a greater priesthood for Jesus than that of the tribe of Levi?

What would happen if we were to repeal “the law of silence” which we have settled as a pall upon the churches? For your information, a lot of places have already done so. They have not said they were doing so, for seldom do we admit that we have been wrong. It causes us to lose face. But there is a conspiracy of silence about “the law of silence.” No more are there labored and tortuous sermons on it. People are becoming free. Occasionally, an imported preacher who comes in to “hold a gospel meeting” unwittingly gets on the theme and belabors it. But he is flogging a dead horse. And he finds an apathetic response. The hearers have outgrown him in their thinking. While I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet, I’d like to predict a lessening of tensions as time moves on. Lord, hasten the day!

This is what happens when succeeding generations outgrow preceding ones. It is impossible to remain shackled to the past. The nerveless fingers on the skeletal hands of our fathers reaching from the sepulcher must relinquish their grip

upon us. We escape from the ghosts of the past and are better for having done so. It is not enough to justify a thing to thinking men and women, by saying, "We have always done it this way." Time gives no sanction to error. We do not sanction wrong by repetition. John F. Kennedy said to the United Nations General Assembly, on Sept. 25, 1961: "Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth." We can never have the unity for which our Lord prayed by conformity.

There comes the moment when a still small voice must be raised in questioning. I think that moment has come.

It was Thoreau who wrote: "No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof."— 4420
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The Cure for Loneliness

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Restoration Review

Once I wrote a book and titled it “One Great Chapter.” It was one of thirty-two volumes I produced in my writing heyday, a word which means “period of greatest vigor.” In it I analyzed chapter eight of that unparalleled treatise in which “the apostle to the Gentiles” wrote his heart out to the Romans. I have often wondered if those in Rome, caught up, as they were, in dreams of politics and of power, really appreciated it as much as I do, almost two thousand years after it was dictated to Tertius. There are many great chapters in the new covenant scriptures. There are no inferior ones. As I begin to write about John 17, I pray it will not reach the proportion of a book. I know you are praying that even harder than myself. But my heart is filled and I cannot promise.

The chapter contains the longest recorded prayer of Jesus. It was not the longest, for sometimes he continued all night in prayer. But it was the longest one preserved for us by the disciple whom he loved. It was uttered just after he had finished speaking to the apostles. They had just told him that at last they were sure of one thing— that he knew all things. He had just remarked that he had come from the Father into the world, and now he would reverse the order and leave the world and go to the Father. What this kind of language does to the theory of the unitarians, I shall leave them to tell you. There were no unitarians when Jesus spoke these words. For your information,

there were no trinitarians either.

It was a day when wisdom was elicited by questioning. Ever since the day of Socrates, four hundred years previous, the dialectic method of instruction and investigation by questions and answers had prevailed in many of the schools of thought in the Greek world. But the disciples said it was so apparent and sure that Jesus knew all things, it would have been useless for any man to ask him profound questions to test him. And that fact made them believe that he came forth from God whose “judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out.” Every human method falls flat on its face when used against God. The fact that Jesus knew all things, and that any man was an ignoramus to question him was enough for his disciples. It ought to be enough for us today as well.

Jesus questioned them “Do you *now* believe?” Then he told them that very soon they would be scattered, everyone to his own home, his own ways, his own thoughts. Jesus would be left alone, bereft of human companionship, or arm to lean upon. But then, almost casually, he gave the prescription for one of the most widespread maladies of our modern sophisticated culture — loneliness. Never before in the history of humanity has there been such loneliness as now exists. And it exacts its due, a frightful personality toll from millions. Jesus pointed out that human companions would fail and leave him *alone*. But he remarked that he was not alone because the Father is with him. Not that he *was* with him, or *would be* with him, but he *is* with him.

That is the cure for loneliness— to have someone with you. I think of an elderly woman in the inner city who wept bitterly as she told me, “I’ve got a home, I’ve got plenty to live on, but I’ve got no one to talk to.” I am helping a man who went on a three-day alcoholic binge, and lay on the floor from Christmas Eve for almost three days in a stupor, and who said, “I had no one who loved me or cared for me. I went crazy.” Jesus knew he

was not alone when men ran away. He said he was not alone because “the Father is with me.” That is the best prescription available. We need never walk alone!

Jesus spoke these things to the disciples that they might have peace in him. A lot of good folk are betrayed by their dependence upon their dictionaries. A dictionary is like any other tool. It is not for universal use. One definition it gives of peace is “the absence or cessation of war.” But just because a nation is not firing cannons at another is no indication of peace. They may have substituted insults for cannonballs. Our peace is personal. “He is our peace.” The peace we have in him is tranquility resulting from reconciliation. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” The peace of which Jesus speaks heals, repairs, and makes whole. It is active and not passive. As Shakespeare said of sleep, it “knits up the raveled sleeve of care.”

In the world we will have tribulation. Tribulation is from the Latin *tribulum*, a threshing instrument. It refers to a flail which was brought down continuously upon the unresisting grain. There are those who seem to be always under the rod. They hardly rise from one catastrophe until another strikes. This is our fate in the world. In all of this we are told to be of good cheer. Our mood should be one of conquest and not surrender. We do not fight for victory. It has already been won. All we need do is to claim it. “I have overcome the world.”

After speaking *these words* Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven. Most of us do not. We close our eyes and bend our heads downward. We would think it strange if one looked upward with eyes open. But it is not the attitude of the head, but that of the heart which counts. It is not the pose or posture of the outer man but it is the petition of the inner man which constitutes prayer. One of the most effective prayers I ever heard was uttered by a man hanging head down two stories up, with his foot caught in a chain dangling from a scaffold. I do not recommend it as a

position which all should choose. I am more interested in the words with which Jesus began his prayer, “Father, the hour is come.”— 4420 Jamieson, St. Louis, MO 63109.

The Myth of the Authority of Silence

Restoration Review (November 1985): 175

Restoration Review

Have you ever really thought what a gruesome image we project to the rest of the religious world? What a reflection of strife, division and the party spirit they must see when they gaze at us. The only thing that operates in our favor is not our adherence to the word of God but their own fragmentation. It is hard to point the finger of scorn at someone with a crooked leg when neither of your own is track straight. It is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. But the thing that makes us look bad is that we began as a movement to unite the Christians in all of the sects, and we have ended up with more sects than anyone else on the current world scene.

What is our problem? It is evident that some of the principles upon which we operate are termite-ridden and worm-eaten. So long as we keep trumpeting them we will proliferate our parties. We may pick up a few dissatisfied strays who will pay lip service to what we advocate, but thinking people will pass us by like a freight train does a tramp. And I am bold enough to say that one of our weaknesses is the perpetuation of the myth of *the authority of silence*.

We claim authority from two sources. One is what God said. The other is from what He did not say. I buy the first. I

stake my hope of eternal life upon it. But the second is by nature divisive. It undoes the first. We can unite every belief in the apostolic testimony upon the first. But having united them we will scatter them into fragments upon the basis of the second. We must either divest ourselves of this idea or throw in the towel and cease declaiming that we are working to unite all believers. Actually we are working to divide them. Let me tell you why I affirm this.

1. *The theory is based on a false assumption.* Those who hold it operate on the conjecture that God laid down a meticulous pattern for the believers in the first century. The word “meticulous” is from the Latin word for fear. There is inspired within everyone an unhealthful fear of deviating in the minutest respect. This provides some grotesque examples of attempts to reproduce the original in a time and culture foreign to the one in which the Christian faith came. For years, the Quakers used “thee” and “thou” as a form of address. The Old-Order Amish and others wear “plain clothes” which means coats without lapels. They scoff at wearing ties as they would any other work of the flesh. Their women wear a prayer veil which appears as a doily on top of the head.

For years our brethren railed against “bobbed hair,” a subject no longer discussed from our pulpits. It has now been relegated to certain of the Pentecostal sects, whose women make up in elaborate and bouffant coiffures for their inability to trim their locks. The early church did not have radios, so for years we warned against them. The Bible says nothing about the television sets so we went through a period of lashing out at “piping an open sewer into your living room.” One segment of the restoration movement drew a line of fellowship against owning an RCA or Magnavox, and gave new converts thirty days to get rid of the instrument of Satan in the living room.

An editor of the *Firm Foundation* has had much to say about what he calls “pattern theology,” although I have

observed that he, like the rest of us, is generally able to make either the pattern or the theology flexible enough to provide what he wants. That is why he is called “a liberal” by little minds who could not define the word if they were to be shot at sunrise. The pattern is not what the pattern provides or prohibits. It is simply that the pattern itself is a creation of latter-day saints. My only pattern is Jesus. He is also my *theos logos*, my theology. Jesus died to establish a relationship with God, and not to hand down another Law.

The fact is that since God did not provide every little detail to be ritually kept by all people in all places at all times, the silence of God has no authority involved in it. Actually it is dictated by western culture. We are always getting our culture and God’s will confused. If we ever get them sorted out into their proper barrels we will be a lot happier. What we do with the pieces left over will present some problem. The easiest way to dispose of them will be to do what Paul did with his past life, toss them in the garbage can.

2. The “law of silence” is not a law at all. Like so many of our other “laws” it is not found in a statement in the holy scriptures. It is derived from textual juggling. Certain passages are lifted from both the Old and New covenant scriptures and are brewed together to make the heady tea which becomes our unwritten creed. The one who selects them knows what he wants to prove before he chooses his “proof.” By manipulating them skillfully he can make them prove what he wants to prove. But is that what God wants proven? If not, how can one derive his conclusion from the text? Is this not a form of wresting the scripture? Is it fair with the Book to treat it in such fashion. Alexander Campbell had a word for those who did so. He called them “textual scrap-doctors.”

Take for instance the “gopher wood” argument devised primarily to prove that the use of instrumental accompaniment in conjunction with praising God is a sin. We shall ignore for the

time being the validity of *any* argument taken from the old covenant scripture to prove such a proposition. The contention is that since God authorized gopher wood out of which to construct the ark, Noah had no choice. The use of any other kind of wood would have condemned him to death with the unbelieving ante-diluvians. It is implied that if Noah had used one other kind of board in the construction, the whole vessel would have been grounded, all the animals would have been trapped in it, and would have drowned in the deluge.

The general deduction is that “gopher wood” was from a particular species of tree. In my palmy days I used to identify it as cypress. But George Bush, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature, at New York University, writes, “Probably trees, or rather *woods of Pitch*.” He further adds, “It is doubtful whether *gopher* is the name of any particular species of tree.” And again, he says “In other words, a general term for any kind of resinous wood suitable for the purpose.” It may have been that, instead of having no choice, Noah had quite a choice in selection of materials. Perhaps he did not have to search around for a *gopher tree* after all. The most that can be said about the argument which has been made with such assertiveness is that it is full of doubt, and a little unworthy of one who is attempting to establish “authority.” Such textual manipulation is a travesty on the judgment of one who seeks to guard his own integrity as an interpreter.

It is true to bow before the authority of God is spiritual in the highest degree. Such authority is found in what God has revealed. One can read it in what he has spoken. The church is built upon the apostles and prophets, upon what they revealed. It does not have another piling holding it up and representing what they did not say. To be in subjection to that is to be in subjection to the vacillating authority of men. That is degrading and denigrating to the spirit. When men devise arguments based upon their theorizing, one should contest them and not consent to them. To do the latter is to surrender the freedom wherewith

Christ has set us free. Every hierarchy on earth operates upon assumed authority. “But it shall not be so among you, for all of you are brethren.”

The Jews were preoccupied with what God had not said. They engaged in long and pointless discussion over what God must have meant in areas where he had not spoken. The result is that they made void the law of God by their traditions. We also have our traditions. No people who have survived more than two generations are without them. We will be fortunate indeed if we do not frustrate the will of God, which is the unity of all who trust in Him through faith in Jesus, by those traditions which we hear proclaimed more frequently than we do the blessed gospel.

Out of This World

Restoration Review 1 (January 1986): 216

Restoration Review

In John 17:13, Jesus points out that one part of his preparation for return to the Father was to share some things while still in the world. This was done that the envoys might have his joy fulfilled in themselves. The original of the word for joy is *chara*, gladness, delight, happiness. Jesus entered the world to the sound of angel song, “Joy to the world,” and now he is going to leave with his joy fulfilled in men: They were given the word of the Father, and they had the assurance that the Holy Spirit would bring all things to their remembrance, “whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26). Theirs would be a perfect recall.

They had to endure the hatred of the world. That hatred was not something to create wonder. “Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you” (1 John 3:13). Jesus said, “If the world hate you, you know it hated me before it hated you” (John 15:18). We tend to love our own. There is an old saying, “Every crow thinks its own is the blackest.” So the Lord says, “If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.”

Yet, Jesus did not pray that they should be taken out of the world. They were the light and leaven of the world. They were the salt of the earth. They had to be in contact with it. They had

been chosen and ordained to go and bring forth fruit. They would pay the price in a world which hated them. That price, with one possible exception, was death. Jesus did not want them removed from the world, until the world itself proved unworthy of them. He did pray that they should be kept “from the evil.” The word for evil is *poneros* and may refer to temptation, thoughts, or trials. Inherent in it is any destructive attitude or action, and Jesus did not want their testimony to be influenced for evil. Like Jesus, they were not of the world.

Our Lord asks that the Father sanctify the apostles by His truth. The word sanctify is from the Latin *sanctus*. It means to consecrate or set apart for a holy purpose. It was used of things as well as people. It corresponds to holy or hallowed. The truth of God has power to sanctify us to His service. And, as a rational being we contact that truth through His word. It is His means of communication, and our means of dedication. It is to be deeply regretted that we live in an age when the word is circulated so widely and known so little.

God sent Jesus into an alien world. It was a world made by him and yet it knew him not (John 1:10). In spite of that he was the true light, which lights the way for every man who enters the world. Just as the sun rules the day by giving light, so the Son rules the world by giving moral and spiritual light. Those who seek to ignore him by closing their eyes walk in darkness and are blinded. They do not affect the light, but their own condition. The sun shines as brightly on a world which refuses to see it as it does upon one where every person has his eyes wide open. Just as the Father sent Jesus into a world which rejected him, so Jesus sent the apostles into that world.

He consecrated himself to the work of the Father for their sakes, so they might be consecrated through the truth. They needed a role model. Jesus not only gave them the truth, but he gave them an example of perfect reaction to it. He told them and showed them. He left an example that we should follow in his

steps (1 Pet. 2:21). He was the pioneer and perfecter of the faith, going on in advance and blazing a trail through an alien world. The reason Jesus consecrated himself was for the sake of the disciples. He wanted them to be sanctified in the truth. In the final analysis this meant being consecrated to him.

Of transcendent importance to us is the fact that Jesus did not limit the scope of his prayer to those he had been given as ambassadors by the Father. The word “apostle” means “one sent on a mission.” Involved is the sender, the one sent, the mission to be accomplished, and the message by which it is to be accomplished. The apostles were dispatched into all the world. They were to proclaim the Good News to every creature. They were God’s servants in the winnowing process. Those who believed were the grain. Those who refused to believe were the chaff. And Jesus prayed, not alone for the apostles but for all who believed in Him by their testimony.

Belief in the person of Jesus on the basis of testimony was to make the difference. Our salvation was made to hinge, not upon the breadth of our knowledge of things, but upon the depth of our faith in a person— one who lived and died in the realm of history. This is one of the most amazing demonstrations of divine wisdom and ingenuity. It is our only hope of achieving fellowship. We can agree upon him and his identity. The apostolic message was one of sincere faith— producing assurance that Jesus is the Son of God. And all who believe that are to be one. The fact that Jesus prayed for them to be one is proof that all may not be one. We tend to pray for those things which we desire to see transpire.

Yet we must not forget that this was the Son praying, and while he does not arbitrarily act to force men into a certain pattern of behavior, neither does he petition God for what is vain and impossible. And while the sad record of the past points otherwise, my hope for the future of true oneness of believers in Jesus is unquenched. I expect the prayer of Jesus to be honored.

Whatever it takes to achieve it I am sure the Father will provide. I do not expect to live to see it, much as I would like to personally hail the great day, but I feel the time is coming when the brotherhood of man will be as wide as the acceptance of Jesus. May God hasten that auspicious day!— 4420 Jamieson, C-1, St. Louis, Mo. 63109.

They All May Be One

Restoration Review 4 (April 1986): 275

Restoration Review

There are limitations to the prayer of Jesus. He does not ask that all men be one. It is here, I think, that some members of what is casually referred to as “the ecumenical movement” are in error. The word, like Catholic, refers to the whole world. It means universal. But Jesus is not a universalist. He, better than anyone else who has walked earth’s trails, knew that Satan existed and that he deceived men. In their eagerness to see everyone who has drawn the breath of life eventually saved a great many of the gentler ecumenists have labored for the inclusion of all who worship gods of their own designs or thought processes.

Man, by nature is a religious being. He will worship something. An object of worship is as essential to him as food and drink. If he does not have it, he ends up being an atheist and worshipping himself. He imposes his puny and feeble mind to blank out the God of the universe. It is sometimes argued that it is not fair to judge those who have had no opportunity to hear about Jesus. But we need not judge them. God will judge them on the basis of absolute justice. This we cannot do. We can only approximate justice based upon the collected experience of the ages. But the prayer of the one who died for men is that all those who believe in Him may be one.

He prayed that they might be one, in the Father and in the

Son. That sounds like the opening stanza of a new song, doesn't it? In reality it is the only hope we have of ever attaining oneness. Outside of Christ we are selfish, petulant, jealous and resentful. That is why political peace is a virtual impossibility. Hours upon hours of talk around the conference table end in futility. Brilliant men come to an impasse in negotiations. Meetings end in utter frustration. But if the world would come to believe we could meet as brothers rather than as antagonists. The burden of guilt lies squarely upon the shoulders of those of us who have pleaded for parties rather than peace. Our testimony has been misguided and has wreaked havoc in the hearts of men.

“As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” Let me tell you how mistaken I once was about the import of those words. I was caught up in the vain fallacy of unity by conformity, an absolutely unattainable goal by thinking persons. The only possible way to attain even a semblance of it is for each person to unscrew his head and deposit it under the rear seat while he listens only to a preacher. Even then, conformity will be only a physical acquiescence, for as soon as one retrieves his rational apparatus and turns it on he will find himself in some doubt. But I was like a wasp when I started preaching— bigger when first hatched out than at any other time. So I reasoned with my relatively passive and sleepy audiences that God and Christ had no differences of opinion. They saw everything exactly alike. And we had to do the same.

I do not know what changed me. Maybe it was marrying Nell, but, all of a sudden it came to me that the reason the Father and Son had no verbal differences was because both of them were infallible. I was not and neither were those to whom I was speaking. Fallible people are subject to errors in their thinking. All of us have been a little fanatical about some things until someone honked at us and guided us into the right lane.

I came to realize that Jesus was pointing out, that, in the

final analysis, all oneness is between individuals. It is not organizational. It is not institutional. It is not materialistic. As the old-time valentine used to have it, "If you love me, like I love you, no knife can cut our love in two." So I started practicing love for those who desperately need it and I ended up down in the inner city among drug addicts, alcoholics, prostitutes and run-aways, telling them of the love of Jesus. A lot of churches think I am crazy, but remember I said it was not organizational. Love needs no stamp of approval. It requires no authoritative pronouncement. All it needs is a heart filled to overflowing. "Come to me, and out of your belly shall flow rivers of living water." It took a long time for me to get to him through the jungle-growth of philosophy, theology, churchism, and all the rest of the religious gobble-de-gook, but, sure enough when I arrived the river began to flow.

The amazing thing is that a number of others have been touched by the waters. We all start with the one source but we flow different ways. Still, we are doing it together. We have learned what "oneness" is all about. We do not question whether one is a member of this religious segment or that. We are only concerned that he believe in Christ through the apostolic testimony and that he is obeying Him as far as he understands, and that he wants to help where help is so desperately, frighteningly needed. All kinds of people come for help from Pentecostals to Presbyterians, from Catholics to Congregationalists, from alcoholics to atheists. We help all of them. And all kinds extend help. I mean all kinds. You see, we have not isolated anyone with a registered trademark, a Good Housekeeping seal of approval, or a sectarian title. We merely call the place "The Cornerstone— An Adventure in Christian Fellowship." They know us by our lives and not by our words. And we are making a difference in the asphalt jungle.

Of course, all of this is peripheral. The central thought, the bull's eye, the real target is "that the world may believe that thou has sent me." The world will be won to believe in Christ,

when all who believe are one in Christ. Of course, it is nice to write about oneness as I am doing. I get a real bang out of it. And its nice to go to big meetings and listen to sometimes pompous discussions about what we need. But in the final analysis there are just two things that count— faith and love. These cannot be given in a charged atmosphere by fervent speakers, regardless of how loud they yell. Some of them have an axe to grind and bring their own grindstone with them.

Faith and love are fruits of the Spirit. If you go to bed some night and cannot sleep, and find yourself crying because your life is so empty and futile, those tears may be the first drops of the river of life-giving water flowing out of you. They mean you have finally come to Him. After all these years of noise and bombast, you have finally found him in the “still small voice.” When Jesus spoke of the rivers of living water He spoke of the Spirit. And when you arise the following morning with your jaw set in determination and your heart pounding in a strange way it has never throbbed before, you are on your way.

And the world will see it and sense it and begin to be drawn closer toward you because of Him. Oneness is the fruit from seed planted by those who are so irretrievably hooked to, and on, His purpose that they cannot be pried, shaken or beaten loose. While others are gathering to debate how it is brought about, and what each one will have to give up or take on, you will be enjoying it, basking in it, thrilling to it. You see, it does not come by debating *things*. Your life is His because His life is yours. It is just that simple!— 4420 Jamieson, Apt. 1C, St. Louis, MO. 63109

The Hour Is Come

Restoration Review 7 (September 1986): 334

Restoration Review

“The hour is come.” Repeatedly in the past Jesus had affirmed “My hour is not yet come.” Suddenly he changes and affirms its arrival. It was inevitable and certain. And with its coming he offers a prayer for glorification. I wish I had an adequate definition for glory. It would be of inestimable value in understanding John 17. It is used in the various forms, over and over, in the chapter. I know some things about it. To the Jewish people it carried with it the idea of weight, or heaviness. It was not a mere evanescent something. Paul uses the expression “a far more exceeding and eternal *weight* of glory” (2 Cor. 4:17) when he compares it with our *light* affliction.

I know the Hebrew word is *kabed*, and the Greek is *doxa*, but that does not tell me a lot. Like other words these are symbols of the qualities, and have been selected by men to describe the inner sense of meaning. Words are poor substitutes for the ideas they seek to convey, necessary as they are. I have often explored the word with others, but they are generally as limited as myself, so I am about resigned to awaiting his *epiphany* which will be both uplifting and destructive (2 Thess. 2:8). In any event Jesus asked the Father to grant the weight of His presence to him. The accompanying brightness so often mentioned in this connection is not the glory, but the visible manifestation that it is present.

Jesus wanted the glory to be mutual, or reciprocal. He would glorify the Father as well as receiving glory from Him. The Father had given him power over all flesh. This was not *dunamis*, or inherent power. It was *exousia*, delegated authority. It had been bestowed upon him. Jesus has received authority over all flesh. I gather that this does not refer to the body with its tissues and cells. It may be employed as it is in Acts 2:17, where Joel is quoted, “It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.” I take this to refer to Jew and Gentile alike, without prejudice or distinction.

The purpose of this was that he should give eternal life to as many as had been given him. The fact that Jesus has authority over all flesh did not automatically grant them eternal life. It did not obviate the right of their individual choice. To be given authority is one thing, to be given individuals destined to eternal life is another thing. It is essential that eternal life be defined. Otherwise, we will think of it in terms of days and years. It does not refer to the quantity of time, but to its quality. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly. The abundant life does not consist of how long we live, but of how we live. It is not spending time but sharing life. Some of us live more abundantly in one day than others do in a year.

Jesus defines it as knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom he sent. “True” refers to reality, and God is the only one who is real. He is genuine. He is not counterfeit. There is no other with which to compare Him. He is the only one. All other gods were made by man, but man himself was made by the only true God. And eternal life is to know Him and the anointed savior, for that is the meaning of the words— Jesus Christ! But the word “know” in the scripture has a more profound meaning than we generally accord it in our conversation. We often limit it to developing a practical grasp of a person or thing through association, instruction, or study.

But, in the sacred writings, it conveys the deeper and more

intimate concept of experiencing something. It is for this reason it is used for having sexual intercourse. The first time it is employed is in the early part of Genesis. "And Adam knew Eve, his wife, and she conceived and bore a son." Two persons were united in such a close relationship that a third, or new life, sprung from the association. That is what happens when we come to experience God and Christ in absolute and unqualified surrender. As a result of our union a new life begins. We are born again. Old things pass away. All things are made new. No wonder such an experience results in eternal life.

Jesus glorified the Father on earth by finishing the work he had been assigned. I think of this a lot of times when I see men and women in an emotional frenzy, with hands waving, eyes closed, and shouting, "Praise God," or "Hallelujah," or "Glory to God." I have a difficult time thinking of Jesus in the midst of such a sweating, straining, or shouting mob. It might be better for them to do as he did by finishing the work he has given them to do. This is what glorifies Jesus on earth. There are millions of starving, thirsting, helpless ones in the earth whom God has told us to assist. But it is easier to shout "Praise God" than to finish the work we have been allotted.

Jesus had a glory with the Father before the world was. I like that. I have seen a few characters in my time who think that Jesus was created somewhere along the line. Michael Jackson is the latest of a flock of archangels of one segment of Jehovah's Witnesses. Some of the cultists who rap on your front door and want to explain to you all that is going to happen, and when, have a kind of "up in the air" theory about Jesus. They can out-talk anyone who will let them do it. I do not let them so they soon remember they have another appointment and are late for it. I actually believe that Jesus was with the Father before the world was. He was not some kind of after thought. "The Word was with God and the Word was God."

I do not think he was "a god" as the Jehovah's Witnesses

think. They even made their own translation of the Bible, which they try to palm off as genuine on the unsuspecting, to establish that crackpot notion. But if you traced everything back to the beginning, when you get there, Jesus is already there. Before the world was he was with the Father and sharing in His glory. Glory always means “the presence of God” regardless of how much else it means. Jesus wanted the Father to glorify him with His own self. That is what happened before the world was. And that is Glory with a capital “G”. —4420 Jamieson, Apt. 1 C, St. Louis 63109

The Name of the Father

Restoration Review 9 (November 1986): 377

Restoration Review

In John 17:6 Jesus declares that he had manifested the name of the Father unto the men given to him out of the world. It is an interesting observation. The word “manifestation” in our language literally means “struck by the hand.” That which one feels becomes evident, apparent or obvious. In the Greek it is *phaneroo*, a word which always has about it the quality of light. “Whatsoever doth make manifest is light” (Ephesians 5:13). Jesus turned the flashlight on the name of God. He held the lantern so they could see plainly what was involved.

We use a name simply for identification. It meant much more among the Jews. It was used by them to describe the sum of all the attributes which made up nature or character. It refers to the qualities or traits which distinguish an individual. “To manifest the name” of the Father, meant simply to demonstrate to the men the mighty power and purpose of God’s name. Demons were cast out in that name (Mark 9:38). Mighty works accompanied it. The apostles belonged to God before they belonged to Christ. God gave them to Jesus. It was the Spirit of the Father which spoke in them (Matt. 10:20). The expression “kept thy word” means more than to merely have in possession. It is used for Peter being *kept* in prison (Acts 12:5). It is used of the guards who *kept* the door (Acts 12:6). It means to guard, to stand watch, to protect.

As a result of the closeness and intimacy with the apostles they knew the origin of all things that Jesus had received. The authority, the power, the teaching, were all from the Father. The words which he gave them convinced them of the divine origin of Jesus. They believed that he had been sent of the Father. In reciprocal love Jesus prayed for them. He did not pray for the world. It is interesting that the word world is *kosmos*. It refers to the universe as an orderly system, the created world in symmetrical beauty. Our word *cosmos* is derived from it, a flower of exquisite orderly beauty.

In this instance, Jesus did not pray for all the inhabitants of the world, although God loved them (John 3:16). But he had been given certain ones out of the world, and he prays for them specifically. This does not indicate any less interest in the world. It is only as the select group of apostles functions faithfully that the world has any chance of being rescued and saved. He points out that “all mine are thine.” This should be true of all. But the reverse “all thine are mine” could be said only by Jesus. Glory accrued to him from the fact.

We now learn the meaning of “the hour is come.” Jesus’s span on earth is over. He has finished the task assigned to him. He is returning to the Father and will be in the world no longer. He is leaving the region of the created for the realm of the uncreated, the presence of the Father. But the apostles will remain in the world. They will be subject to its brutality and misunderstanding, its sorrow and death. His work is being committed to human hands. And He prays that God will keep them through His name. All of the power, energy, protection and loving care that are part of the divine character will be directed toward their preservation for the supreme task now being left in their hands.

Nothing is more important than their oneness. For more than three years Jesus has “discipled” them. The “sons of thunder,” the tax collector for Rome, the Galilean zealot, all of

the motley group that walked and talked with him. They have observed, watched and studied his methods. They have absorbed and assimilated his approach to the human predicament. But all of this will go for nought if they prove to be unable to work together in mutual respect. Men require not only an admonition to be one. They also need an example. Precepts are important and idealistic, but we need something practical to use as a model or pattern.

No greater demonstration of oneness is found in the universe than that which exists between God and Christ. "That they may be one *as we are*." We must aspire to divine oneness in the midst of a strife-torn world. In spite of our varied personalities, often distorted and disintegrated, we must seek earnestly to bring them under the reign of Jesus that we may be one with others. Often, without realizing it, we seek to be one on our terms. We must abandon all such stubborn fancies and seek to be one on *his* terms. What a difference it makes when we sit down amid turmoil and ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do in my situation?"

When Jesus used the three little words "as we are," he was pointing to the only perfect oneness between two individuals in the whole universe. Both were sinless, infallible, and unfailing. We can aspire to the oneness which characterizes them. It gives us a goal. It provides meaning of life. The fact that we will not attain it does not lessen its importance as that for which we always strive.

Jesus and the apostles were a close unit while on earth. Their humanity motivated the men to say and do strange things. A gentle rebuke put them in their places. They were kept, not in the name of Jesus, but guarded in the name of the Father. This shows its protective power. The only one lost from the intimate little circle was "the son of perdition." It is interesting that Jesus does not designate him by name. Perdition is from *apoleia*, destruction. It is once rendered damnation in 2 Peter 2:3. The

scripture which was fulfilled is a good example of two-fold meaning in the fulfillment of prophecy, for Jesus may have had reverence to Psalm 109:8. But the fact that it was divinely-interpreted, as well as divinely-given, is assurance enough for us.

In any event, Judas was the only one of the apostles who was a Judean, as was Jesus. The rest were Galileans. Iscariot was not a second name. It meant “man of Kerioth,” a small town in Judea. He was the only one who was lost! —4420 Jamieson, Apt. 1C, St. Louis 63109

Have We Run Out of Steam?

Restoration Review 2 (February 1987): 34

Restoration Review

Sometimes I wonder about Samson. He was one of the weakest men morally and one of the strongest physically of any man who ever lived. He could sleep with a Philistine harlot, or carry off the gates and bars of a Philistine city with the same gusto. The tragedy of his life was his association with the temptress, Delilah. He lied to her as she lied to him, until finally she wormed out of him the secret of his strength. He was sleeping with his head upon her knees when she cried out "The Philistines are upon you, Samson." He awakened and said, half to himself, "I will go out as at other times, and shake myself free." But the Book says, "And he did not know the Lord had left him." He was kind of childish in his powerlessness.

It is then I am reminded of the people of God whom he has called. After many acts of divine daring they become entangled with the affairs of this life. They are asleep in the lap of the world. Finally, summoned from their stupor they try to shake themselves free as at other times in the past only to discover that God has withdrawn his power. One of the saddest things ever spoken about some who will come in the time of stress in the last days is that they will "Hold the form of religion but deny the power of it." Like an embalmed corpse the life and energy have fled. Like a petrified tree no fruit is borne. They are called men of corrupt minds and counterfeit faith. They are accused of being lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

Without being meddlesome or unjustly accusative I think we can see the condition described prevalent upon every side today. In our preaching we lash out at the symptoms. We treat the infection by picking away at the pimples. But there is a deep inflammation which cannot be administered to on the surface. It is the result of the loss of the power of the Spirit. Until it is remedied nothing else will avail. What has happened, of course, is what always happens. We have identified the faith with the culture. It happened in Rome. It happened in Russia. It happened in England. Now it has happened in the United States.

God is the chief deity for white middle-class Americans. He almost became the tutelar divinity of *upper* middle-class America, but the current recession, depression, or whatever it was, coupled with runaway inflation and high interest rates, knocked the “upper” off the designation. It was in the *[text appears to be missing in the original.— e-Editor]* inhabitants of Indian villages whose land we were stealing, and placed black human beings on the auction block and sold them like cattle, into slavery which was sometimes worse than death. It is in the name of God that we still resent refugees from Vietnam, whose daughters American soldiers violated, worshiping at the same table with us. “Let them form their own church” is our self-righteous cry. And we think it strange that the body is paralyzed, impotent, unable to grow. It is a strange wonder it has endured as long as it has with its make-believe faith.

Recently I have gone over the names of some of our “tribal heroes” who were in the minds of all in the 1950 era. Wherever you went men were telling of their exploits in debate. Brethren would sit on the front porch and guffaw as they recounted their quick sallies at some of the Baptists or Mormons who signed propositions. But you do not hear of them any more. They have vanished into the thin air of yesteryear. They have folded their tents like the Arabs and as silently stolen away. Some are still alive. They are no more in demand. Those who place them on their programs speak apologetically about owing them a little

recognition because of the past. Once they were our party dragons, breathing out fire and smoke. Now they are seen to be mere crocodiles sleeping in the mud along the river. And the Baptists and Mormons are still growing greater in number.

What has happened to write “Ichabod” over our lintels? We have run out of steam. And the reason is we denied the impetus and energy of the Holy Spirit. We have manufactured preachers wholly incapable of moving out into our kind of world. We have taught them to mechanically recite scripture by the page. We have given them the clever answers to make to Methodists and Pentecostals on some disputed point. In some cases we have converted them into robots, vainly repeating the sermon outlines they have inherited from professors, some of whom are still teaching from sets of notes they have used without alteration or change for twenty years. And we have sent them forth starry-eyed into congregations where the elders are engaged in power struggles, the members hardly speak to each other, and the community laughs at them behind their backs.

I grew up in a small segment of “the restoration movement.” The Apostolic Review was our link with one another. It was next to the Bible. Our enemies were the Gospel Advocate and Firm Foundation. Our particular version of “the Church of Christ” was the kingdom of heaven. Others were outside the pale. They were digressive, factionalists, disloyal, usurpers, and guilty of heresy. We were “the faithful” in spite of some of the moral lapses which occurred. Now I find myself grieved that I was betrayed by the party spirit. We were sure that if Paul came to our town, he would pass everyone else by and worship with us. I am no longer sure he would even have come to our town if his donkey had become lame at the city limits.

I resent the fact that I was kept confined and unable to share the concepts of friends and neighbors, some of whom led lives which were a credit to those with whom we met each

Sunday. It has become difficult to overcome the retardation I suffered by our attitude. But chiefly I resent the false propaganda to which I was subjected about the Holy Spirit. I grew up with the idea that the Spirit was “the word.” A hundred times I have heard John 6:63 quoted. And a hundred times I have heard it misconstrued and misapplied. “It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and life.” In our naivete every time we see the word “spirit” we think of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was simply affirming that the words He spoke were spiritual words producing life, in contrast with the manna (which was the subject of the chapter) which the fathers ate, digested and all died.

After I learned better about that, I was subjected to the idea that the Spirit operated only through the Word. If that is restricted to aliens from the kingdom, I agree that it is through the proclamation of the Good News. But I no longer believe it is true with the children of God. The Spirit even makes intercession for them with groanings which cannot even be uttered. The Spirit never violates the Word, but he is never trapped by it either. The fact is that the Spirit is not restricted or restrained by any idea, dogma, doctrine or concept of his work. But there is nothing to be gained from sitting around bemoaning the past. We would all do it differently if we had it to do over. But the time spent groaning about what has happened means that much less in which to make something happen in the future.

Jesus told the Sadducees that they were wrong because they knew neither the scriptures nor the power of God. He made a distinction between the two. I make the same distinction. Paul declared that he imparted the message in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who possess the Spirit. We conclude that the Spirit is the teacher and the words are the things taught. They are taught to those who possess the Spirit. It is high time for us to claim, accept and use the power of the Holy Spirit. Taking a

purely negative position will do us no good. We will shrivel and die on the vine. Our efforts will become ineffective and unproductive.

Like the seventy we need authority over all the power of the enemy. If we go forth clad only in our own strength we will succumb. We are too weak, too frail, too human. It is only when we depend upon “the power of God, with the weapons of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” that we shall be more than conquerors.

A Lodge Among Cucumbers

Restoration Review 7 (September 1987): 134

Restoration Review

The daughter of Zion is left as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers.— Is. 1:8

The world around us is changing. All of us know that. Many try to ignore it. They want to awaken and find things exactly as they have always been. But we are in the Space Age. The horse and buggy days have gone forever. We can no longer operate as we once did. The day of the three week meetings every night including Saturdays, is past. It is over and gone. I once held a seven week long series of such meetings. It went right through Christmas and New Year. I immersed seventy people. The congregation where I held it now has less than twenty.

The times are like they were in the days of Isaiah. And the modern daughter of Zion is being left like a cottage in a vineyard. All the grapes have been plucked. The vines are tangled. The leaves have fallen off. There is no use to maintain a shelter against the sun and rain. No one is going to steal anything. The cottage is broken down. The windows have been knocked out. The roof is shattered. If the Lord had not left a small remnant we would have been like Sodom and Gomorrah. Brethren do not realize this as yet. They protest that all is well. But they are merely treading the courts. They are calling assemblies.

It is high time that we make some changes. We must “relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.” Our large cities are social pig pens. That is why everyone has moved to the polished suburban areas. The alcoholics, drug users, immoral and retarded are without hope and without God in the world. It is time for those who search garbage dumps for pizza crusts to find something better to digest. And it is as we go among them that they will find incense which is not an abomination and feasts that God’s soul does not hate.

We must cease to depend upon professional preachers to save the world. One of the greatest demonstrations of our day is the World Bible Class. It makes use of any man, woman or child who wants to be a teacher. Hundreds of people in remote areas of the world are being led to Christ by people of whom they have never heard before. Communities of believers are meeting in jungle fastnesses to worship the Lord of hosts. It is not done by a formal, stilted, dyed-in-the-wool process but by simple lessons drawn from the Word.

It is time for us to begin in our country. The best way appears to be by home Bible study classes. If two or three gather to search the scriptures God will bless it. We will have to get out of our church “edifices” to do it. Modern man is scared silly of “church buildings.” He is afraid they are traps, set and baited. He will seldom go near one. He fights shy of them. Any child of God can teach a home study. Where Nell and I attend there are three going on. One is for women, one is taught in the home of newer members, another in a storefront.

Those who live in an apartment can secure a study for the others who dwell there. This means that women will not have to leave its security to risk getting out on the street. Such a study can be taught by anyone who is familiar with the Book. Teacher and pupils will grow as they search the scriptures together. Everyone can get in on it. There will be no more sour faces

because one was not called upon, or because one was given more to do than another. Think of new arrangements for teaching the Word. If nothing else, go to a nursing home and bring joy and comfort.

I want to make a special plea for instruction of the young, especially teen-agers. They are definitely in need of frank and open sharing. They should be taught the dangers of alcohol, drugs and dope. They need meaningful instruction about sex. And they must be taught about suicide. It is important that they see an example of genuine love shown to them. They must be taught self-respect, dignity and the value of commitment to one greater than self. If you have the ability to teach youth I urge you not to delay. It is now or never. In a few years it will be too late.

There must be a real concern for the aged and lonely. Our population is gradually becoming older. This is a strange phenomenon. But it presents a duty and an opportunity. The banishment of the silver-haired to homes where other aged and sick appear is not enough. Those who conceived and delivered us into the world deserve more than arbitrary abandonment. They should not be condemned to wither like a dying oak or like a garden that no one waters. We should not become irate at some of the traditional positions to which they cling. They are merely voicing what they have been taught—echoing the things of yesterday.

It is time to remember that mere giving of money will not postpone the coming of disaster. God said to ancient Israel, “Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me? . . . Who asked you to bring all this when you came to worship me? Who asked you to do all this tramping around in my Temple? It is useless to bring your offerings. I am disgusted with the smell of the incense you burn” (Isaiah 1:11-13). We must realize that the destruction of transgressors and sinners shall be together, and those who forsake the Lord will be condemned.

The prescription has been written out. The remedy is ready for the taking. “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well.” This is a definition of repentance. Surely it is necessary in our lives. Unless we plan to be “as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that has no water,” we had better plan to get right with God today. Tomorrow may be too late. We may become like a lodge among cucumbers!

As Openly As Sodom

Restoration Review 9 (November 1987): 175

Restoration Review

One wonders why Sodom became so wicked. Other cities were given over to sinning as most cities were. But few places in the world were so wholly given to transgression. Even the name has been given to a grievous sexual sin that is still prevalent today. The name has the literal connotation of “a place of lime.” It is mentioned 49 times in the Bible, ten of which are in the new covenant scriptures. Always there is about it an air of crime and utter disappearance. The first time we hear of it, all the men of the city, young and old, surrounded the house of Lot. They yelled out for him to bring the men out to them who had come to spend the night. The Good News Version says, “The men of Sodom wanted to have sex with them.” Isaiah refers to it in chapter 3, verse 9.

The chapter begins with the prediction that the Lord is going to take away from Jerusalem and Judah “everything and everyone that the people depend on.” He will take away their food and their water. Nebuchadnezzar led three assaults against the city. The first was in 606 B.C. The last was in 587 B.C. The siege had become so intense that the people sought to eat their own children. The record literally says “the people had nothing left to eat.”

The record goes on to say that God took away “their heroes and their soldiers, their judges and their prophets, their

fortunetellers and their statesmen, their military and civilian leaders, their politicians and everyone who uses magic to control events.” It would be hard to administer a city with all of the administrators taken away from it. I am thinking how difficult it would be to maintain order in Saint Louis with all of the governors and pseudo-governors having been removed from it. I am sure Jerusalem was no better off. They were told that the Lord would let the people be governed by immature boys.

The earth now has 5 billion people. It is growing by 87 million each year. That seems a little incredible to former history students like myself. But even more astounding is the fact that 90 percent of this growth is occurring in countries the least able to support it. Every year the farmland supports fewer people. And every year more of them crowd into the cities. Often they are forced to live like animals in the warrens of towns incapable of supporting them. In the filth and refuse of such cities men live like beasts of the field. Humanity is crushed out of them. Degradation takes its place.

Heroes and soldiers disappear. When there is nothing worth defending or fighting for, they are no longer needed. Judges and prophets are forced out of existence. When all are in the same unbridled mess there is no use of a judge to determine the right or wrong of things. Prophets are not required to speak glowingly of a coming age, or of a time of plenty. Fortunetellers who are so hungry they cannot speak, or so thirsty their tongues grow silent, will be allowed to perish in the calamitous state of things. Statesmen who have no state to rule and regulate can say farewell. It is that way today in many places.

That is an apt portrayal of conditions in Ethiopia and the Sudan. And every year the desert encroaches upon land which was fertile but a few years ago. Some there are who blame the Russians for it. But it seems that rather than point the finger of accusation it would be better by far to make known ways of reclamation. Lebanon, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran need help. Raw

wounds need to be healed. Starving bodies need to be filled. A great mass of gold trickling through manicured fingers will avail nothing if pitiable cries are uttered from the perishing throats of boys and girls.

Most of you will recognize at once that I am writing about things as described by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz. He points out that doom and collapse are the two-fold fate which result from doing things against the Lord and openly insulting God himself. He says that their prejudices will be held against them. He declares that “your leaders are misleading you, so that you do not know which way to turn.”

If you read the daily newspaper regularly, or if you watch television news daily, or listen to the newscasts over radio, you are generally wandering around in a daze. I know of one elderly person who watches the soap operas with avid interest. She says she does not listen to the news because it confuses and confounds her. She chooses the liaisons and bedroom scenes and fills her mind with such contamination and filth.

God still rules. He knows exactly what is going on. He knows what is happening in the already over-crowded world. He knows every nook and cranny of the earth's surface, every cave and mountain vastness. He knows what is in your heart and mine as I write these words. And God is saying again to all of us, You have no right to crush my people and take advantage of the poor. One thing can be certain. The poor have a defender. There is someone who counts. And one of these days things will be made right.

I get to thinking occasionally as I read that it is no mere accident that the poor are cared for. It is not the work of politicians or statesmen. It is not the work of governors or mighty men. It is the work of little people. They do not expect to leave thousands of dollars to be spent by others. They do not postpone their sharing until death, when someone else will take

over and apportion it out. They realize that God sees, knows and understands.

What a magnificent power is invested in those who realize what a blessing is afforded to be able to work, to make enough upon which to live and provide for the helpless. How they cheer my heart. How they make my soul rejoice. It can never be said of them, “The city gates will mourn and cry, and the city itself will be like a woman sitting on the ground stripped naked.” That is the fate of a city whose people “sin as openly as the people of Sodom did.” Fretting gates and a city sitting on the ground naked! What a price to pay for open sin! —4420 Jamieson 1-C, St. Louis, MO 63109

Cedars of Lebanon

Restoration Review (January 1988): 217

Restoration Review

Lebanon lay to the north of Palestine. Much of it consisted of snow-clad mountains. On these grew the famous cedars which reared themselves heavenward. The Lebanese, being devoid of good farm land, developed a maritime regime. The tall trees became the masts for their sailing boats. The lesser ones provided planks out of which the ships were built. In chapter two of his book, the way we have it divided, Isaiah spoke about the cedars and oaks, and the ships of Tarshish.

He begins with a condemnation of the people. Wealth, in those days was counted by silver, gold, and horses. Their land was full of silver and gold. There was no end to their treasure. The country was full of horses. There was no end to their chariots. But it was also full of idols. The inferior man bowed before them. The great man humbled himself. The voice of the Lord was heard saying "Forgive them not." They are encouraged to hide in caves, and to seek refuge in the dust. It is affirmed that Israel was influenced. They followed foreign customs. They worshiped objects they had made with their own hands.

It has always been a question as to why God's people compromised with sin so easily. From the time they were divinely delivered from Egypt they mouthed criticism of the God who freed them from slavery. They murmured for bread. They

murmured for flesh to eat. They wept copious tears for water to drink. Eventually their kings turned the very temple into a place of wild idolatry. "They broke all the laws of the Lord their God and made two metal bulls to worship, they also made an image of the goddess Ashtoreth, worshiped the stars and served the god Baal." They sacrificed their sons and daughters as burnt offerings to pagan gods. They consulted mediums and fortunetellers. They became wholly corrupt and irretrievably rotten.

Isaiah said "Everyone will be humiliated and disgraced." He predicted that a day was coming when human pride would end and human arrogance be destroyed. Men had hidden in caves. They had dug holes in the ground. They took all kinds of means to hide from God's anger. They wanted to escape from His power and glory. It is then that the prophet spoke of what God would do. "He shall destroy the tall cedars of Lebanon, and all of the oaks in the land of Bashan. He will sink even the largest and most beautiful ships."

I think of that as I gaze at pictures of large and beautiful cities in the pages of popular magazines today. These, too, can pass away! The places where once they stood can become rugged piles of shale. The streets can be blasted into oblivion. The earth can reverberate and be shaken. Our own "Mountains of Lebanon" can be wasted. It is incredible that these things may pass away. But they can, and will! A day is coming when human pride will be ended and human arrogance be destroyed.

It may seem incredible but the day can come when Nashville, Houston, Dallas and Abilene will be blasted into oblivion. Men and women can go skulking to hidden bank vaults to live out their fear and shame. Darkness will be welcome. The light of the sun will be a catastrophe. The explosion of one well-directed nuclear warhead can undo in seconds what it took centuries to erect. The accomplishments of skillful men can disappear in a mingled heap. Young men and women, as well as

those who have attained their majority, can be lost in a moment of immediacy. And with them can go all of the gadgets in which they have trusted.

Centuries later, the people who remain, will come searching the ruins, turning over the stones as they now do in Ur and Nineveh, looking for some semblance of a vanished culture, picking up the toys of a previous people. The tall cedars of Lebanon and the sturdy oaks of Bashan will be destroyed. Of course, this does not need to happen. In Isaiah 1:27 God promises to save everyone who repents. In 1:16, 17 we are encouraged to stop doing evil, and learn to do right. Three groups are mentioned as test cases upon whom we can practice. The best protection against atom bombs are lives of righteousness and well-regulated behavior.

Tall cedars growing on towering mountains are beautiful. The wind, sighing among the branches makes an attractive chorus. One likes to drive among the trees. He experiences solace for the soul. He derives a real sense of tranquility. He hesitates to leave and return to the noise and turmoil of the city. But what a difference when a stately grove has been swept by fire. The tangle of trunks and limbs presents a symbol of death and destruction, a holocaust of despair.

I offer a plea. That our own country may maintain its beauty and utility, that it may be a land of freedom and liberty, let all who read this resolve to renounce wickedness and unrighteousness. May we become so pure that the hand of God will have to be spread over us in blessing and not become a mailed fist of punishment. May the cedars of Lebanon continue to be a bright and beautiful decoration of love, joy and peace! God grant it! —4420 Jamieson 1-C, St. Louis, MO 63109

Restoration and Reformation

Restoration Review 7 (September 1988): 334

Restoration Review

Thomas Campbell, son of Archibald Campbell, was born in 1763. Although born in Newry, Ireland, he was the son of Scottish immigrants. This may have helped him to decide to attend school at the University of Glasgow. The 18th century has been designated the golden age of Scottish thought. Thomas graduated with honors. He then enrolled in the Anti-Burgher School of the Seceder Presbyterian Church. When he finished he returned to Ireland where he began to teach school.

While teaching at Ballymena, near the shores of Loch Neagh, he met and married Jane Corneigle. She was a descendant of a French Huguenot family. Their first son was born September 12, 1788. They named him Alexander. When Alexander was 18, the father decided to come to America. This was on doctor's orders. He arrived in May of 1807. He was well received by the Chartiers Presbytery. But on a trip north he made a serious mistake. He was called upon to administer the Lord's Supper. He expressed regret at the existing divisions. He urged all who were present to take of the bread and cup when offered. For this he was eventually forced out of the presbytery.

He gathered a group at the home of Abraham Altars, who was not a member of any sect but was interested in what Mr. Campbell was doing. As Campbell led in prayer stillness prevailed. He began to speak to them. When he finished he

announced the principle upon which they would proceed, which was, “Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.”

The neighbors decided to erect a plain building in which to meet. This they did about three miles from Mt. Pleasant. Campbell preached here regularly. He stayed in an attic bedroom in the home of a Dr. Welch. It was here that he wrote the *Declaration and Address*. When he read it at a special meeting in the home of Jacob Donaldson, Sept. 7, 1809, it was unanimously approved.

The Washington Association had been formed and met every Lord’s Day. It was composed of persons of various sects. It was specifically said that they did not intend to form a church. They selected 21 of their number to meet and confer with Mr. Campbell to determine the proper means to carry into effect the ends of their association.

Campbell stated in the document, “We beg leave to assure our brethren, that we have no intention to interfere, either directly, or indirectly, with the peace and order of the settled churches, by directing any ministerial assistance with which the Lord may be pleased to favor us, to make inroads upon such; or by endeavoring to erect churches out of churches to distract and divide congregations.”

In the first paragraph of his enunciation of principles Mr. Campbell wrote: “The Church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one.” He believed that, while at heart he was a Presbyterian. It was several years later that he said very plainly, but humbly, “I have been a Calvinist all of my life, and I expect to remain a Calvinist until I die.” He believed firmly in allowing everyone who loved the Bible and read it and formed conclusions about it, to show their faith as conscience dictated. He would discuss its meaning with anyone. But he would not cast them out if they differed with his own

conclusions.

The *Declaration and Address* played the same part as did the *Institutes* of John Calvin or the writings of Martin Luther. All three were written by honest men. This is evident in that the first two fled for their lives. All of them were expressions of what the three men thought the Bible had revealed to them. All of them contained some error. Neither was intended as a substitute for the Bible, and neither was a new production in exactitude of the apostolic way.

I am confident Mr. Campbell suffered inward pangs when he saw the gradual growth and development into a church, and witnessed the debates that resulted from it. But the second generation is unlike the first. The initial ones may drink from the stream which knows no pollution. The next are forced to quaff waters that are filled with defilement of men's thinking. By 1889 a man stood up in Illinois and declared that brotherhood would no longer be recognized with those who used choirs or salaried ministers. This opened the way for new divisions over almost anything imaginable.

We are forced to agree that all of the schism resulted from the thinking done by men— many of them uneducated, many virtually illiterate. Factions were formed; parties multiplied. A golden dream went glimmering. What caused its dissipation? Certainly it was not to reinforce error but to try to recapture truth. But it seemed to be overlooked that powerful writers may be without perfect knowledge. The attempt to bind human deductions upon those who are not ready for them always results in untimely divisions.

Mr. Campbell wisely pleaded for reformation rather than restoration. The difference between the two is at once apparent. Reformation deals with present conditions. One looks at the believers before him and resolves to improve their lot and to implement their state. Restoration looks backward at a previous

condition and seeks to recapture it for the present. It would be impossible to restore the New Testament ekklesia. The word “church” is not a translation of it. It is an English word from a wholly different background. In the translation which Alexander Campbell brought over to this country (which was the work of George Campbell, James Macknight and Phillip Doddridge) the word “church” does not appear. A note tells why.

No one today knows enough of the order and behavior of the primitive saints to restore that order to this day. We know about the gospel, the Good News. And we know that it is the message of a crucified Lord and risen Savior. We can read about some of the things the saints did when they assembled. We do not know about their motivation in every case. And we can reproduce in our own way what they did as we understand it. God will be the final judge of our worthiness. I am glad that we are saved through faith in a person and not by the exact reproduction of an exact and early pattern of which many of us know but little.— 4420 Jamieson, Apt. 1C, St. Louis, MO. 63109.

Recognition of the Lordship of Jesus (1)

Restoration Review 4 (April 1989): 71

Restoration Review

The Christian is one who accepts as a fact that the ongoing history of mankind was interrupted by a unique event in which the Eternal One broke through the flesh curtain, and entered the realm of time and space. Deity was manifest in human form in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. This divine-human encounter took place in the days of Augustus Caesar when Rome was mistress of the world, and specifically in an outlying province of the empire called Palestine.

Although it was singular, this advent was not unexpected. At the time the world was divided into two ethnic groups— Jew and Gentile— and the evidence is that both of these had been conditioned to expect the coming of a divine personage to share the fate of mankind and to alter the destiny of the world.

The Jews generally accepted as a fact that their remote ancestor, Abraham, had been called out from the polytheistic culture and influence of Chaldea, in order to become the progenitor of a race through which the God that made heaven and earth would eventually bless all the families of the earth. It was not held that the blessing would accrue from the race as a whole, but rather that it would produce an individual through whose beneficent rule peace would reign upon the earth.

The foundation of this hope lay in both promise and prediction. An example of the latter is found in the last words of Jacob to his sons, the tribal heads who gathered about his bedside for his final blessing. Unto Judah he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be" (Genesis 49:10). The word "Shiloh" was interpreted as meaning "the Tranquilizer, the Pacificator, the Peacemaker." It is understood to mean that a rule of peace would be inaugurated upon earth through the ministrations of one sent from God for that purpose.

That this is true is evidenced by the rendering in the various Targums. The Jerusalem Targum reads, "Kings shall not fail from the house of Judah, nor skillful doctors of the law from their children's children, till the time come when the King Messiah shall come." The Chaldean version says, "One having principality shall not be taken from the house of Judah; nor a scribe from his children's children, until the Messiah come, whose the kingdom is."

It is important to note that the tribal identity of Judah, was to be preserved until the peacemaker should come, and that His coming was identified with rulership or dominion. In other words peace would reign because of the reign of the Messiah. When He was regarded as having authority in the lives of men, and his rule was respected, peace and tranquility would ensue, and unity would prevail through the magnetism of His personality. "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

It was because of the firm belief in the coming of the Messiah that the Jews regarded themselves as recipients of and guardians of the oracles of God. This stimulated their reading of Torah and Hafterah, law and prophets, and prepared them to expect the Messiah. At the time when Jesus was upon the earth, and his forerunner was proclaiming the imminent approach of the kingdom "the people were in expectation, and all men mused

in their hearts of John, whether he was the Messiah, or not” (Luke 3:15). The Jewish nation at that very time, because of ardent study of the covenant scriptures, was instructed to believe that the advent of the Messiah was imminent.

At the same time, the non-Jewish world was seething in an undercurrent of hope which centered around the advent of a divine personage. We cannot pause here along the way to trace the origin of the pagan yearning, or even to review the means by which the hope came to be centered in a person, although the temptation to do so is almost irresistible. We must content ourselves with brief references which will serve to document what we have suggested and then move on to weighty matters of deduction.

The Jews had been dispersed through all nations, and many of them had been given positions of influence and trust. Always scholarly in the field of religion, they contributed much to the ferment of thought in such places as Alexandria, Tarsus and Rome, centers of learning. Unquestionably, their knowledge of the prophetic writings had an impact upon the pagan world. (To be continued) —4420 Jamieson, 1-C, St. Louis, MO. 63109

Recognition of the Lordship of Jesus (2)

Restoration Review 5 (May 1989): 96

Restoration Review

Josephus was born in A.D. 37. He was about thirty years of age when the insurrection of the Jews which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem broke out. He was sent to a command post in Galilee, when his headquarters at Jotapata, fell into the hands of the Romans on July 1, A.D. 67, after a siege of forty-seven days. After Jerusalem fell, Josephus returned to Rome with Titus, where he was furnished a special apartment by the emperor Vespasian, who also made him a citizen of Rome, and allotted him a pension. It was in Rome that Josephus wrote his "History of the Jewish War" in seven books. This history was approved by Vespasian and Titus, the latter affixing his personal signature to it, to show his endorsement. King Agrippa, who was still living, wrote sixty-two letters commenting on various phases of the history, and the author appended two of them as documentation of his work. We will insert but one quotation from the voluminous work in which Josephus seeks to account for the Jewish uprising.

"But now, what did most elevate them in undertaking this war was an ambiguous oracle that was also found in their sacred writings, how, about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth. The Jews took this prediction to belong to themselves in particular; and many of the

wise men were deceived in their determination. Now, this oracle certainly denoted the government of Vespasian, who was appointed emperor in Judea.” (*Wars of the Jews*, 6-5-4).

Here one must distinguish between Josephus as a chronicler of fact on the one hand, and as an interpretive politician seeking to ingratiate himself with his imperial patron on the other. The facts are clear. There was an ambiguous article, based upon the sacred scriptures of the Jews, which predicted that “about that time” one who was born in Judea was destined to become a universal ruler. This was accepted so generally that “many wise men” attached great importance to it.

This oracle was known by the Romans and is given specific mention by the historians Tacitus and Suetonius. Both of these men were eminent statesmen and authors and both lived while the apostle John was yet alive. Both were friends of Pliny the Younger, who was appointed governor of Bithynia by the emperor Trajan. He proofread their writings. Their testimony indicates that the pagan world was also in a state of expectancy, and the indication is that it arose from the circulation of the Jewish scriptures. It was no doubt the influence of this almost universal belief which caused the poet Virgil, to write his Fourth Eclogue, about the time of Herod the Great,

The last age, decreed by Fate, is come;

And a new frame of all things does begin,

A holy progeny from heaven descends,

Auspicious be his birth, which puts an end

To the iron age! and from whence shall rise

A golden state far glorious through the earth.

The fact that he applied this to Salaninus, the son of the

Consul Pollio, who had just been born does not affect the point that we are making, that the entire world was laboring under the conviction that a holy progeny from heaven could usher in the last age of time. We can summarize by saying that the Jews by interpreting the “time prophecies” of their sacred scriptures, had concluded that a world ruler would be born about this time, and the Gentile world accepted this because of various forces occurring to stimulate such hope.

Matthew adds undesigned confirmation to this by recording the visit to Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Jesus of certain Persian Magi, or Arabian sages. These men knew for whom they were looking. “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him.” Upon hearing this question Herod summoned the official interpreters of Judaism and asked them where the Messiah was to be born. Without hesitancy they designated Bethlehem as the place and quoted the prophecy which stated that from this city “shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.”

This last statement brings into focus my theme in this chapter. It is not simply that Jew and Gentile alike expected a divine breakthrough at the time Jesus was born, but that a new order would be created, in which “the holy progeny from heaven” would rule and govern, and those who accepted Him as Messiah would also regard Him as Lord. In one of the Messianic prophecies Isaiah had foretold the birth of a male child who would establish a universal rule of justice and righteousness. “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.” Four things pertinent to our presentation are affirmed. (1) The government will be upon his shoulders. (2) Of the increase of his government there will be no end. (3) He would sit upon the throne of David and rule over the kingdom. (4) The zeal of the Lord of hosts would perform this. (To be continued) —4420 Jamieson, 1-C, St. Louis, Mo. 63109

Recognition of the Lordship of Jesus (3)

Restoration Review 6 (June 1989): 114

Restoration Review

When Jesus was born, the proclamation was made that “the kingdom of heaven is approaching.” It was upon this basis that John, in preparing the way, demanded reformation of life and led the Jews to confess their sins and be immersed in the waters of the Jordan. The word for kingdom as used here (*basileia*) does not refer to place or people, but to rule or exercise of power. The new order of things was to involve a Messianic reign, and this was to be a reign of conquest until all of the created universe was brought into subjection at His feet.

It is true when the child was born he was called Jesus (Savior) because he was to “save his people from their sins.” But His Saviorhood must never be emphasized at the expense of His Lordship. The design of God and the purpose of the ages was to coronate the Son as king and to subjugate the universe to His rule. It is useless to talk about “Christianity” apart from this purpose, for this is its purpose. A Christian is one who pledges allegiance to Jesus *as king* and follows Him as a loyal subject, a citizen of the eternal kingdom.

In our day we see other emphases being made to the exclusion of the eternal purpose. These may be good but they may also serve to confuse when not related to the kingdom idea.

Great campaigns are waged for “soul winning” or “personal salvation” in which Jesus is portrayed as a Savior who is able to free us from the guilt and penalty of sin, and even to protect us from the practice of evil. All this is valuable and precious, but it may also appear pointless if it is not seen to be part of a universal program in which we all become representatives of a power destined to rule the world in righteousness and peace.

John related reformation of life to the rule of heaven. “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” This became the identical proclamation of Jesus (Mt. 4:17). When he called the twelve envoys from among the disciples, and sent them forth, this was the message they were told to announce (Mt. 10:7). The motivation for repentance and reformation of life was the approaching rule of heaven. It is apparent that this was true of all the preaching prior to the coronation of Jesus as king, the culminating act of His Messiahship. Men were saved, and this was important. But they were saved *for* something as well as *from* something.

The primary mission of Jesus upon earth was to prepare his rule for men, and prepare men for His rule. His teaching was to define the nature of the kingdom, and to distinguish between it and the kingdoms of this world. The Sermon on the Mount is a dissertation on the character and life demanded of those who would be citizens of the kingdom. It opens with the statement, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” The kingdom is mentioned nine times, and twice in conjunction with the type of attitude which will debar from it. Just as important is the stress upon the master-servant relationship which is the essence of lordship (Mt. 7:21).

The apostles were ambassadors to an alien world, and were called, trained, and commissioned by the Prince in anticipation of His coming rule. Admittedly, because of their human frailty and circumscribed vision, they did not at *first* grasp the significance of what was said about the kingdom. They

were Jews and Galileans, and their whole life had been saturated with the hope of an earthly “Golden Age” in which a Messiah would throw off the yoke of Roman dominion, and drive out the army of occupation, so that the earthly splendor of the kingdom of heaven in the days of David and Solomon would be restored. It is not surprising that, even after the resurrection of Jesus, we should hear them plaintively asking, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6).

When we contemplate the perspective in which these humble fishermen viewed the words of Jesus, we can readily understand their disputes about who would occupy the most prominent office in the new regime (Lk. 9:46). We can also sympathize with the wife of Zebedee who sought to win for her sons the favored position of prime minister and privy counsellor in the coming kingdom (Mt. 20:20-21). Jesus allowed none of this to interfere with his preparation of the men, knowing that after his ascension and coronation they would be under the supervision of the royal Guest, the Holy Spirit, of whom He said, “These things have I spoken unto you, while I am still with you. But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (Jn. 14:25-26). The proof of the effectiveness of this method is found in the grasp of the kingdom exhibited in the preaching and teaching of the apostles after their reception of the Spirit.

One of the envoys later wrote of “the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11). The careful student will quickly recognize in the words “Lord,” “Savior,” and “Christ,” the offices or functions of Jesus, and will not need to be told that a kingdom implies rule and the word “Lord” indicates authority. The rule of heaven is eternal but the Lordship of Jesus is temporal. It had a beginning and it will come to an end. It was not inherent in His person nor granted when He entered the world. His sojourn on earth enabled Him to prepare for His coming Lordship when the authority was

bestowed.

After His resurrection, in anticipation of His coronation, He came and said to His envoys, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.” On this basis He commissioned them to enroll disciples of all nations by baptizing. They were not to begin their work of proselytization, however, until they received the Holy Spirit as a visible assurance from heaven that He had taken His place of authority on the throne. When the Holy Spirit came upon them, accompanied by audible and visual evidence, one of them declared, “Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified” (Acts 2:28).—*published posthumously*

Recognition of the Lordship of Jesus (4)

Restoration Review 7 (September 1989): 135

Restoration Review

The authority and power as delegated to the apostles was intended to continue during the reign of God's anointed. We believe this to be proven by the following:

1. When Jesus commissioned them to go and make disciples of all nations he did so upon the basis that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given unto him. His promise was that if they acted in all fidelity he would be with them "always, to the close of the age" (Mt. 28:19,20).

2. The power to bind and loose on earth with heavenly recognition of the authority so exercised was not subject to temporal limitation. "Truly I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt. 18:18).

3. The apostles were to occupy thrones and judge during the regime of the Son of God. A throne is symbolic of authority and the right to judge implies exercise of power. "You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk. 22:28-30). Here

is proof from Jesus that the apostles were to possess authority beyond their span of life upon earth.

4. They constituted a component in the foundation of the temple of the Lord, a structure equivalent to the one body composed of Jews and Gentiles who have access in one Spirit unto the Father. These are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2:20-22). It is apparent that so long as the temple of God stands, the apostles must be in place in the foundation.

In commenting upon this verse Albert Barnes writes,

On them and their doctrine we can build. On them the church is reared. It is not on the opinion of philosophers and lawgivers; not on creeds, symbols, traditions, and the decisions of councils; it is on the authority of the inspired Book of God. The church is in its most healthy state when it appeals for its doctrine most directly to the Bible.

5. The perpetuity of the place and authority of the apostles in the divine scheme is evidenced by the fact that their names are inscribed on the foundation of the eternal city the new Jerusalem. John, who was one of the apostles, was provided an apocalyptic vision. He says, “And in the Spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God . . . And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Rev. 21:10, 14).

Christianity differs from every system of religion devised by men in that it is a divine revelation. All others are the discoveries or inventions of human genius. Christianity is not a philosophy, a code of personal ethics, or a formal declaration of

behavior. It is a relationship with God and Christ exemplified by principles growing out of a divine nature rather than by precepts imposed externally and legally. It is a fellowship of the redeemed, a fraternity of the reconciled. It was a mystery to mankind, hidden in the divine will until revealed in the fullness of time. “When you read this you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph. 3:4, 5).

Since it was revealed to the “apostles and prophets” they constitute our source of information relative to its nature. When men become confused or entangled in their reasoning concerning it, the court of appeal must be to the words of those who received the revelation. If the Holy Spirit knew the things of God, and revealed those things to the authorized spokesmen, we must revert to the words of the holy envoys if we would recapture the mind of God. When the weight of opinions and divergent interpretations saddles the church with a yoke which it cannot bear, the strength must be renewed, not by occasional injections of new philosophical deductions, but by recovery of the primitive proclamation, power and purpose.

When God’s people become involved in schism, we cannot hope to achieve peace by relying upon debates with theologians, regardless of how sincere they may be to attain that desirable goal. Indeed, it is out of such debates most of our strife has arisen. It is only when all of those who love God, both small and great, resolve to consult the apostles, without partisan prejudice, that we can gain renewal for our day.— *published posthumously*

Recognition of the Lordship of Jesus (5)

Restoration Review 9 (November 1989): 175

Restoration Review

Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you have crucified.
— Acts 2:36

Jesus was made Lord *for* us as well as *of* us. The first enables Him to bestow upon us every blessing we need as His citizens, the second to require obedience of us as willing subjects. Since the ultimate in blessing is eternal life, by being given all authority, including that over life and death, He can freely give us life. In His prayer for oneness He declares, “Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou has given Him.”

The rule of Jesus is one of conquest. There are two great powers locked in unceasing combat. These are referred to as “the dominion of darkness” and “the kingdom of God’s beloved Son” (Col. 1:13). While the earth is the present theater of war, all created beings in the universe are engaged in the strife. Not all of these are terrestrial beings, that is, flesh and blood. Some are celestial, others infernal. “For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of the present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

Just as there is a hierarchy of unholy angels, so there is a hierarchy of holy angels. Thus Jesus has been given all authority in heaven, as well as on earth. He can direct the host of heaven, the legions of angels, in the titanic conflict. God “raised Him from the dead and made Him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come” (Eph. 1:20, 21).

The reign of the Messiah, as Lord will end in certain victory. “For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For God has put all things in subjection under his feet.” When the Son has completed the task, under the authority bestowed upon Him by the Father, He will deliver the kingdom to the Father again. “Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.” This will not be the end of the kingdom of heaven, for there will always be a rule of God. It will only end the Christocracy, the rule of God’s anointed, a reign created and inaugurated for a certain purpose. “When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be everything to everyone” (1 Cor. 15:28).

While the ultimate victory of virtue over vice, and of truth over error, is assured, those who enlisted under the banner of Jesus can help or hinder, by their attitude toward Him and each other. The latter will generally be affected by the former. When the citizens of the kingdom work together in harmony, the fortunes of the kingdom will be advanced in their area. When we appropriate and squander the resources available for conquest of the enemy in tribal warfare, the Cause of the Prince of Peace will suffer reverse and reproach. For this reason “a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called” is described as one in which each person “with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, (is) eager to maintain

the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).

Lack of harmony among the disciples of Christ stems from lack of honoring His Lordship over our lives. Unified purpose in promoting the interests of the kingdom, is not something which we can take or leave. It is an order of the king, a command of the Lord. We either do what we are told or defy divine orders. It is not a question of whether we should maintain unity or not, as soldiers in His army, but rather whether we will obey or disobey the mandate of our Sovereign.

Our immediate concern is the schismatic state of the disciples of Christ, and that concern is deepened by a firm conviction that it exists contrary to the purpose of the Lord. He has been coronated in heaven by the Father but has not been coronated in our hearts. We are divided from one another because we have not drawn closer to Him. Our opinions and speculations have been more important than His words. We have spent more time debating about His nature than in imitating His life.

If we are to undo our divisive state we must begin with a mutual recognition of the common ground upon which all may stand to survey the prospect for coming closer together. This can only be found in an acknowledgment that Jesus is Lord. We are separated because we had the will to divide, we can only unite when all bow to a superior will which will lead us together. That Jesus is able to overcome barriers, remove obstacles and unite those who previously were at enmity with each other has been clearly demonstrated in what He did with Jews and Gentiles.

“For He is our peace who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph. 2:14). Certainly our sectarian chasm is no wider than the one which Jesus spanned by His blood. Lord, show us the way!— *published posthumously*

INDEX OF ESSAYS

Mission

by W. Carl Ketcherside

Journals

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W. Carl Ketcherside by Tom Olbricht

Mission Journal 1 (July 1968): 24

Mission Journal

W. Carl Ketcherside of St. Louis, Missouri, has been a controversial, if not significant figure among those who in the twentieth century have expended their energies in uniting believers in the New Testament faith. Mr. Ketcherside is editor of *Mission Messenger*.

Q. Carl, as a fellow Missourian I am interested in your background. Where did you live as a lad and how did you get started preaching?

KETCHERSIDE: Tom, there isn't much to tell. I was born in a rough lead mining village to poverty-stricken parents. My maternal ancestors came from Denmark and settled in a Lutheran colony in Missouri, so I was sprinkled when about a month old. My father, who was a skeptic at the time of my birth, later came under the influence of the Good News and our home was completely transformed. We studied the Word of God daily and I had a working knowledge of the scriptures as a mere lad. Due to my father's illness, as a result of having contracted silicosis, we moved about a great deal and finally settled on a farm in Illinois. I surrendered to the Lord and was immersed by a humble elder of a little rural flock. Within a month, although I was but twelve years of age. I was speaking at congregations in

the area. Through God's mercy and undeserved kindness I have continued.

Q. How can you account for your early views and exclusive concept of God's people?

KETCHERSIDE: The first man whom I heard in the restoration movement was Daniel Sommer; the second was his son, D. Austen Sommer. These men stayed in our modest homes and were like angels from afar in our rude little village. Since we selected the other men who came among us on their recommendation, we were influenced to believe that the party they represented was the one holy, catholic, and apostolic church of God upon earth, and all others were either hobbyists or sectarians. A sectarian was one who had things we opposed; a hobbyist was one who opposed things which we had. We looked at the Word of God through the spectacles which were gratuitously furnished by our spiritual mentors.

Q. What did you first decide to do after your changed vision of the Lord's church?

KETCHERSIDE: I was laboring in a foreign country when the indwelling Spirit, through the Word, caused the scales to fall from my eyes, and the first thing I did was to blink my spiritual eyes in the full sunlight of God's marvelous grace. I returned home and for six long years I read everything written by the pioneers of the restoration movement, literally scores of books. I arduously reviewed every scriptural passage I had ever used to justify division among God's children. I became convinced that we were wresting every one of them, as well as having abandoned the very spirit of the original restoration plea. I prayed and agonized over my own factional spirit, bigotry and intolerance. In 1957 I was ready to defend my enlarged perspective and wrote the first series of articles, untitled "Thoughts on Fellowship."

Q. Have you been disappointed by the response of those with whom you were associated to your changed views?

KETCHERSIDE: No. I do not expect other brethren to share all of my concepts nor to work as I do. I am still able to labor with most of the brethren I have always known, and I deeply respect and cherish even those who feel I have betrayed the Father by loving all of His children. I am no longer disappointed by anything. The hope I now have never disappoints because the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Spirit which has been given unto me.

Q. Have you thought it possible to unify those churches which have a commonality of using vocal music?

KETCHERSIDE: I do not regard them as “churches” because there is only one church. It is not a human organization, but a divine organism. But our factions will be led to unite. We are even now on the threshold of a great spiritual breakthrough in the non-instrument segment of the restoration brotherhood. Many of the feuds of the past will die out. Obviously we will never all see everything alike, for we can no more all see alike than we can all look alike. But the relationship in Christ Jesus will become much more precious than the peculiarities of any of those within it. There will be isolated pockets of guerilla warfare but the great majority of brethren will join forces in public witness to their faith in Christ, regardless of their place of meeting or personal opinions. There’s a great day coming!

Q. What contribution do you think you have made to that end?

KETCHERSIDE: My contribution has not been as effective as I would like. Due to my factional attitude in the past, many beloved brethren are very suspicious of me. I suspect they regard me as an opportunist. Too, I did not leave our faction and join another. I simply stayed where I was and renounced

factionalism as a work of the flesh and a symptom of carnality and immaturity. When I go among brethren, I do not go as one of “their men” but as “His man.” I belong only to Him, so I am free to love all whom He loves.

I have never refused to go where I was invited and have held meetings and studies with various groups among us. This has tended to lessen tensions. My paper is read by brethren in every restoration segment, at home and abroad, and the letters crossing my desk indicate that it has had a transforming influence. This is the first time since the restoration movement began to disintegrate a century ago that an appeal for renewal of working relationships in the fellowship has been heard by brethren in every party, even the more remote and exclusive ones. Perhaps my best work has been to spark the renewed hope that there is an alternative to our past methods. We have been betrayed into thinking that the only solution to differences is division and that the only approach to division is debate. This has only served to fragment us and crystallize factional animosity. It is both unscriptural and unworkable. Differences between brethren are subjects for discussion, not for division. They should be dealt with by dialogue and not debate.

Q. Is this where you see your work at present?

KETCHERSIDE: Tom, my work has completely changed since I met you at the Abilene Christian College Lectureship more than a year ago. Currently I am involved in a dialogue group with Roman Catholic priests and Protestant preachers, to whom I present the restoration ideal. I meet regularly with a group of Jewish business and professional men to discuss the claims of Jesus and submit to questioning. Much of my work is with college and university groups, including the hippie subculture. I have just finished conducting a Spiritual Emphasis Week on one of our largest air bases, through invitation of the Wing Chaplain; and I have recently addressed a California Sunday School Convention of some six hundred teachers. I have

felt that I cannot wait until the rest of the brethren get ready for such encounters. I feel driven by an inner compulsion to bring my witness to bear wherever I can touch the world of mankind. I believe the leaven must touch the unleavened mass, else we will end up with a saved yeast cake and a lost world. Leaven was not intended to leaven other leaven. Nothing is more useless than a pile of yeast cakes huddled together.

Q. Some have thought the restructuring of the Disciples would push conservative Christian Church people toward the noninstrument groups. Do you see any evidence of this? What interest do you have in trying to get these two groups together?

KETCHERSIDE: Since the division in 1925 which occurred over policies on the mission fields, there have been two divergent groups of brethren who use the instrument. These are represented by the International Convention (Disciples of Christ) and the North American Christian Convention (Independents). Many of the conservative brethren are eager to share with us now, if they can do this without surrender of what they regard as their liberty in Christ Jesus. In many places we are able to exchange speaking engagements and participate in mutual forums. I conduct depth studies and meetings with these brethren continually. I have twice spoken at the North American Christian Convention and will speak at their College-Career banquet in Cincinnati this year. I also spoke at the World Convention of Churches of Christ in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Although I am personally opposed to the use of the instrument, I do not make a test of fellowship out of such things, so I have been able to share in a great number of meetings with Disciples of Christ and Independent Christian Church brethren. It is our attitude which builds the walls and deepens the chasms.

Q. I heard you say in a speech two years ago that you had given up trying to get Church of Christ and Christian Church people together and were working to keep Christian Church people united. What do you think you have contributed to that

end? Do you see that as your main task?

KETCHERSIDE: I do not recall the statement and if I made it I am very sorry. It sounds very egotistic and arrogant and I am ashamed of it. We are going to see the schism between instrument and non-instrument brethren healed in many localities. When I first began to move among the instrumental brethren, I found a great many areas of tension, and God has used me to heal some of these, I think. However, I am very concerned about restoring working relationships among all of our brethren, for if we do not solve our original division we will always be a divided movement.

Q. Do you think that the Disciples will merge themselves out of existence? Is that desirable in your view?

KETCHERSIDE: Some of the Disciples of Christ will forfeit their restoration heritage and lose their identity through merger, although many preachers and congregations will not go along. I attended the convention last year and have sat in on sessions in which brethren have planned their opposition to restructure. I do not see how they can avoid division. Many eminent brethren are thoroughly committed to a course of dissent from restructure. In some areas fifty percent of the congregations will assert their independence.

Q. What are the grounds of fellowship as you see them in the scriptures?

KETCHERSIDE: Fellowship is a state or condition into which we are called by the Good News. We enter it by proper response to the Message by faith and baptism. Every sincere immersed believer on this earth is in the fellowship in spite of his mistaken views about a lot of things. We are all “brothers in error” and there are no other kinds of brethren. Moral turpitude, advocacy of doctrines which separate from God, and a persistent factional spirit, are the only bases for dissolution of

the relationship. All of these deny the Lordship of Jesus over the life. Obedience to the demands of the Good News constitutes the ground of fellowship.

O. Would you consider a baptized believer a brother in fellowship who accepts the “death of God” theology?

KETCHERSIDE: Tom, I have been in direct encounter on the campus with men who say “God is dead” and I have learned that this is a broad generalization that covers a wide spectrum of theological thought. Many use the term to express the idea that the concept of God as a mere transcendental personality is outmoded and that it has been superseded by the idea of God as immanent. I am not too much perturbed by those who brand an “altered concept” as the “death of God,” although I deplore their choice of language. I think some of it is projected for its shock-potential on old fuddy-duddies like myself. But I am not going to throw someone out on the basis of semantics. I shall seek to help him improve his speech.

I am not in the fellowship with any person who has been immersed and now denies the existence of God and His personal involvement with mankind in meaningful fashion. God is and He is so concerned with us that He rewards those who make the diligent quest for His being. This is basic to our faith.

Q. What is your attitude on those positions you held before turning to unity interests?

KETCHERSIDE: I am afraid I shall have to plead guilty to retaining most of them. I did not change my views but I altered my attitude toward those brethren who do not share them. They are all my beloved brethren regardless of what they think about instrumental music, support of Herald of Truth, orphan homes, cups, classes, colleges, the millennium, or all of our other problems that plague us. I do not recognize as valid the factional barriers we have erected. God did not create them.

I am greatly ashamed that at one time in my life I would not have called upon you to lead in prayer or to speak in one of my meetings. At that time I mistook fellowship for endorsement, conformity for community, and factional alliance for brotherhood. We still differ about many things, but now you are very precious unto me and so are all of God's children. I shall not measure their loyalty to Jesus by concurrence with my deductions from the scriptures. I have learned that tolerance is not the endorsement of any thing that is wrong, but the endurance of one who thinks it is right.

Q. We deeply appreciate your willingness to answer these questions, Carl. Let me ask one final question. What hope do you see for a uniting of all who profess Jesus as Lord? How do you think this will be achieved?

KETCHERSIDE: There is now a very bright prospect for answering the prayer of Jesus for the oneness of all who believe on Him through the apostolic testimony. It will be achieved by the action of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who belong to the fellowship of the concerned. It will not result from creeds, confessions or concordats; but, as we lose our sectarian fear and factional prejudice and begin to inaugurate sharing experiences with all who revere Jesus as Lord, we will be led closer to one another.

I am constantly involved in such sessions with all kinds of evangelical groups and they listen intently when I present my plea for renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. I devised this approach which is simply the restoration idea embodied in the language which speaks meaningfully to our generation. We must move into the twentieth century.

I earnestly solicit the prayers of all of the brethren that I may be used of God to overcome some of the narrow factional attitudes which I once helped to stimulate. I am firmly resolved

never again to be the champion of any party, sect or splinter, but to be a Christian only in the fullest and best sense of that term. What a thrill it is to be a free man in Christ Jesus! What a source of power to the inner man is the indwelling Spirit!

An Abandoned Dream

Mission Journal 5 (September 1970): 27

Mission Journal

The Hazard of the Die by James R. Wilburn (Austin: Sweet Publishing Co., 1969), 288 pp., \$4.95, cloth.

One of the treasured volumes in my library is a bound edition of the *Christian Review*, for the years 1844-46. In its pages are preserved many articles and travel reports of Tolbert Fanning, the editor. I was born exactly ninety-eight years to the day after he was. He entered the world as the restoration movement was being launched in an aura of hope. I came as its fragmentation was being made public. The history of the century between is a stirring saga, the drama of which is unfolded in *The Hazard of the Die*.

Tolbert Fanning was an independent product of our pioneer culture. Towering six inches above six feet, he disdained the warning of his friends that he could never make a preacher and went on to become one of the most influential proclaimers in the Southland. Mixing a love for hard work and study with an equal love for blooded horses, foxhounds and county fairs, he was often an educator, editor and agriculturist at the same time.

He was helped immeasurably by being allowed to travel two years with Alexander Campbell and by his stay in the Campbell home at Bethany. He was also fortunate in marrying Charlotte Fall, who could teach Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French

and German.

In his book, the reader can trace events leading up to the Civil War and sense the problems created by human slavery when members of the Church of Christ sold their own brethren in the Lord, separating them from their families. Too, there is preserved the early attitude toward rebaptism, the work of the Spirit, fellowship, instrumental music, and Masonry, of those who believed there were Christians in the sects and spoke of members of Baptist Churches as their brethren in Christ.

I found intriguing the story of Jesse B. Ferguson, who left the work in Nashville a shambles after turning to Spiritualism and coming under the guns of Alexander Campbell. It was in reaction to this that David Lipscomb considered going to the Baptist Church. The rise of the missionary society— and the see-sawing back and forth on the issues it raised of such men as J. W. McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin, and Tolbert Fanning— is well told.

Fanning and Lipscomb began printing the *Gospel Advocate* in July, 1855, as a journal in which both sides of controversies could be read. Extreme fairness was always shown to the opposition. One of the most outstanding of such discussions was between Fanning and Robert Richardson on the nature and work of the Holy Spirit. It was in conjunction with this dialogue that Fanning made his last visit to “the Sage of Bethany” and found him senile and forgetful. Selina Campbell would not even allow anyone to talk to Alexander unless she was present in the room to prompt him in his failing memory.

The Hazard of the Die brings home to me once more how tragically we have suffered from the loss of firm but ecumenical spirits which graced the restoration movement of yesteryear. Our own crystallizing and sectarianizing of a once glorious plea becomes evident to the perceptive student. If Fanning were to return in our day he would probably be barred from most of our

pulpits. His articles would no longer be welcome in most of our journals. When his generation faded into the gray mists they took with them the dream that gave meaning to the movement, and left us to battle with each other over the corpse.

The Crying Need

Mission Journal 5 (November 1970): 32

Mission Journal

The crying need of our age is for men filled with the Spirit of God, men who dare to break with tradition, and if need be, die for the vision which they have cherished, until now it nourishes them. The call of God is borne upon every whispering breeze to those who have been enslaved by partisan positions, fettered by fears of reprisal, shackled by bigotry and littleness. The world will not be won to the Christ of a national ideal, to a white man's God, a denominational dogma, or a parochial creed.

Jesus is not the shepherd of a sect but of the whole flock of God. He is not the Lord of a faction but of the whole church of the redeemed ones. A concept which embraces anything less than the ultimate unity of all who believe in Him as one mighty army, is too meager to match His prayer, and will be self-defeating. There is no power in the universe by which we can reduce the body of Christ into a faction or expand any faction into the body of Christ.

We reject the spurious proposal that we must remain apart and at sword's points until we have argued every action of every faction, debated every detail of every dogma, and reached conformity on every conclusion of every complainant among us. This is the sectarian way. It is the way of prolonged strife and drawn out dissension. We are not called to feud to the death but

to find the life that is in Christ Jesus. Our peace is not in a program, a proposition or a platform. It is in a person. “He is our peace who hath made both one.” The way to have unity is to unite, not to have a debate. We cannot argue ourselves into agreement nor debate ourselves out of division! In all of our decades of debate we have not overthrown or eliminated a single sect but we have created a great many new ones!

Let us resolve to make way for the Spirit and we will find the path of peace. The Spirit of God will not divide the family of God. It is men who are devoid of the Spirit who set up divisions. If we will allow the Spirit to have his way with us we will be united in the way with him. We must cease getting in the Spirit’s way, and start walking in the Way of the Spirit!

Adventures in Brotherhood

Mission Journal 4 (October 1973): 8

Mission Journal

I was not quite nine years old when I ran into my first real problem about brotherhood. And it all came about because of a gallon of coal oil— kerosene it is called in these days. If you have time, and are not too busy to listen, I would like to tell you about it.

At the time we lived in a little two-room miner's shack with a summer kitchen out back. It was typical of the houses in the sprawling village dominated by the mine tippie and the huge chat dump, the taling pile left after the rock had been ground at the crushing mill and the ore extracted. There were three younger children besides myself, and another on the way. Papa worked a thousand feet under ground. Every day he went down on the cage, wearing his carbide lamp on his cap so he could see where to use his miner's pick to get to the vein of ore. Sometimes he worked the day shift, and at other times the evening or night shift. There was little time indeed to do things as a family since the work underground was ten hours per day and six days per week.

We children were thrust upon our own resources, and since the one next to me was a boy, we spent a good deal of time dreaming up games to play. When we got tired of playing we could always relieve the tedium and tension by fighting. Nothing else was quite as interesting as a good fight, and it was all the

more fascinating because it was forbidden.

On the day I am going to tell about, Mama called me to the house and told me to take the coal oil can and go to the company store and get a gallon of coal oil with which to fill the lamps. She gave me a nickel with which to pay for it and cautioned me not to lose it. She also told me to take my brother along. I protested because he had a stone bruise on his heel at the time and walked on his toes on that foot because he could not bear to touch his heel to the ground. I complained that he would slow my progress and that he was too young to go to the store anyhow, seeing he had just turned seven. My arguments did not prevail and I took him along reluctantly, muttering to myself and threatening him as we went.

When we arrived at the store there were five or six men, miners from another shift, sitting on the front porch, mostly talking and whittling, and chewing Star cut-plug tobacco. The miners who were not at work gathered here every day. I recognized one of them. It was Cotton-eye Joe. I didn't know if he had another name. Miners were a rough lot and they nicknamed everyone without thought of compassion or concern for feelings. Most of them didn't mind, I guess. Mr. Gorman, who had walked with a limp all his life, was always called "Crip," and Mr. Jameson who had his back broken when a blast went off prematurely on a stope where they were tamping powder in a drill-hole, was called "Humpy" because he walked all bent over and couldn't straighten up.

One of Cotton-eye Joe's eyes was covered with a milky film and was sightless. As one miner said, "School was dismissed in his right eye because there was no pupil." But he was also called Cotton-eye to distinguish him from Deaf and Dumb Joe who lived down by the creek with his mother, and scared all of us kids out of our hides, because he made such funny faces and sounds trying to tell something.

Cotton-eye Joe was the village troublemaker. Everyone knew that he kept things all stirred up. As we walked by him into the store he grabbed me by the ankle and growled like a dog. I jumped like I was shot and stubbed my big toe against the doorjamb. I saw stars. But I went on in and put my nickel on the counter and Mr. Watson took it and filled the can with coal oil and put a potato on the spout to keep me from sloshing it out as I walked.

When my brother and I went back outside Cotton-eye Joe motioned to us and said, "Come here, you boys!" We walked over to where the men were sitting while dangling their feet off the porch.

Addressing himself to me, Cotton-eye Joe asked, "Are you boys, brothers?"

"Yes sir," I said, "he's my brother and I'm his brother."

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"Sure I'm sure, Mr. Cotton-eye. We really are brothers."

"Well, I don't believe it," he replied. "You can't be. He's got brown eyes and yours are blue. How can you be brothers and have different colored eyes?"

"O, that doesn't count," I replied. "According to that your eyes wouldn't even be brothers, 'cause one of 'em is white and the other is kind of greenish."

When I said that the rest of the men slapped their legs, threw their heads back and started to laugh, so I moved over to one side. You quickly-learned to do that when men were chewing tobacco and started to laugh and splutter. You got out of the direct line of fire.

Some of the men could put their fingers to their lips and

make a “V” and spit through their front teeth and hit a tomcat’s eye across a sixteen foot room. They called that expectorating because they said when they did it you could expect the stream to go where you aimed. But when they laughed and spit, you didn’t know what to expect. That’s why I got out from in front of them.

When I said what I did about Mr. Cotton-eye’s eyes not being brothers, everybody but him laughed and took on a lot. One of them said, “That boy’s smart enough he’s liable to turn into a preacher if someone don’t rescue him.”

But Cotton-eye said, kind of grumpy-like, “He’s a smart-aleck, and he’ll be lucky if he keeps out of the pen until he’s twenty-one.”

Then he turned to me again and said, “Don’t be too sure that kid there is your brother. Does he like the same things you like to eat?”

“Sure he does,” I said. “We only have about one thing at a meal, and everybody likes it, except he doesn’t like ketchup on his butter-beans and I do.”

“See, what did I tell you? You like ketchup on your butter-beans and he doesn’t. You can’t even agree on what’s good to eat. I’ll bet he’s not your brother at all. Somebody has just pulled the wool over your eyes.”

I turned away. I didn’t want to be sassy with older folks. It wasn’t right to stand up and argue with them in public in front of other people. A boy of nine ought to be polite at all times around grown folks, else they would think he had no raising by his Papa and Mama.

But I didn’t realize how much I had taken to heart what was said until evening. I was sitting by myself on the back steps and it was kind of dusky gray like all over. The evening star was

shining, and the crickets were chirping, while a dry-weather fly was making that whirring sound that always adds to lonesome feelings. Otherwise, it was all still and quiet, the kind of time when you think deep thoughts away down inside yourself, and wish that you were bigger and knew more things for sure like grownup folks do. It is a pretty ghostly time to be by yourself.

I began to wonder if I really did belong to Papa and Mama. Maybe they had just found me and took me in out of pity. Maybe I was left in a basket on the porch by the front door and I might never know my real folks. Maybe I was a wood's colt. I didn't really know what a wood's colt was, but I knew their mothers had them and no one knew who their fathers were. When folks talked about them they generally spoke real low. Men talked about 'em with a hand in front of their mouths, and women put their fans up and whispered behind them. If I was one, or an orphan either, chances are nobody would ever tell me the truth. Maybe Cotton-eye Joe knew something about me that I didn't know, else why would he have brought up about us being brothers? If that kid had stayed at home and not gone limping along in the road beside me, all this wouldn't have come up. I was happy before and now I wasn't and it was all his fault. He was so sure of everything and I couldn't be at my age. I promised myself I would provoke a fight with him tomorrow and pay him back.

When Mama called and said it was time to go to bed I didn't want to go. I was angry and frustrated and I didn't know why. I thought I'd stay awake in bed and think about things some more. But the smell of the fresh straw in the straw-tick, coupled with the cool breeze blowing through the window and rustling the curtains, making them stand straight out, was too much for me. The screech-owl that lived under the eaves of the barn flew to the maple tree just outside the window and let out a noise that would make goose-pimples rise on your arms. But I just heard him once and then I was gone.

When I awakened the next morning, the one I had always thought was my brother, but about whom I was not so sure now, was still sleeping, kind of wadded up like in bed. I kicked him a good one before I got out of bed and then jumped out, grabbed my clothes and ran. All morning I looked for chances to hurt him and get back at him without really knowing why. I caught him once sitting in the swing under the cherry tree. He was eating a ripe tomato out of the garden, holding it in his right hand and trickling salt into it out of his left hand each time he took a bite. I picked up a bean-pole to try and knock it out of his hand into the dirt, but he stood up and threw it smack into my face, getting seeds all over my hickory blouse and salt in my eye. He ran for the house and I was so blinded I could not chase him.

Each day I became more upset and mean. Mama called me in one afternoon and asked me what had come over me or gotten into me. All I could do was sulk and look at her. I could not tell her that I was worried that I was not her boy and didn't know if I even rightly belonged there. I put my face in my hands and cried so hard that I shook all over. Mama was scared and tried to tell me everything would be all right. But it wasn't and it got worse. I thought I might be dying and I hoped that I would. I wanted to die.

Then one day I heard Mama say to Papa, "You're going to have to talk with him. He keeps telling his brother he hates him and doesn't want to see him anymore. I am afraid if he keeps on he will do something to himself."

It was the next afternoon when Papa got off early from the day shift that he said to me, "Son, let's you and I take a little walk down by the creek." We started down the road that led to Deaf and Dumb Joe's house, but we turned off on a path the cows had made when they came in off the open range in the evening. And we walked down to the overhang, the flat rock which extended out over the creek at the paw-paw thicket. We sat down together, just the two of us.

It was the first time Papa had ever talked to me by myself like one man talks to another man. He began by saying, "Son, I have been wanting to talk with you for a long time. Mama is worried about you and the way you have been treating the other children. You have changed and we do not know why."

I was trying not to cry because I knew men did not bawl when they were talking. Finally I said, "I just don't know who I am. I'm not sure about things, not even anything. I'm not sure I even belong in our family."

For a moment Papa did not say anything. I was afraid he would laugh, but he didn't. He picked up a little rock and tossed it up and caught it. I saw the callouses on his hand which was so rough from using the pick and shovel underground. He started talking very slowly and softly. "When I met your mother and asked her to marry me in spite of the fact that I was only a poor miner, I thought the time might come when I could have a boy like you. That is why, after we had been married a few months, I was glad that she told me we were going to have a baby. When the time came, grandma came to the house to help the doctor, and it was she who brought you in, all red and wrinkled, and I saw you for the first time. You were ours, the first one resulting from our love."

I was crying now, but Papa didn't mention it. He went on. "Later on your brother came, and then the girls, and now Mama is going to have another baby. I want you to be good to Mama and help her and not worry her. You see, we love all of you alike. All of us belong to one another. But Mama had a real hard time when you were born because you were the first. She almost gave her life for you. And now, if your father loves you all so much, you ought to love one another."

We sat a little while after that, neither of us saying anything. I knew that Papa was waiting for me to break the silence. I picked up a little stick and raked a large ant off my

shoe. Then I said, "I will love my brothers and sisters and I'll tell them so. I'm not worried now and I'm not afraid. It was being afraid that caused me not to love them."

We got up and started toward home. I noticed things that I had not seen before. The clumps of wild violets were a richer purple. The wing feathers of a jaybird were bluer than I remembered. Something was gone from inside me, something that had felt like a knot in my chest. It was a beautiful world and it was wonderful to be a boy, alive and filled with hope. The terrible thing which had been gnawing at my insides wasn't there any more.

When dusk came and we had to go to bed, I took my things off and hung them on the brass knob on my side of the foot of the iron bedstead. My brother hung his things on the knob on his side. We crawled into bed and wriggled around until each of us had a place hollowed out in the straw tick to suit us. It was dark and kind of ghostly quiet. I could hear the swish of the owl's wings as he swooped by and then I heard a mouse squeak when he pounced upon it. The faint bark of Deaf and Dumb Joe's possum hound was carried on the night breeze.

I spoke to my brother lying beside me. "I'm not going to hate you anymore. I'm not going to fight you and I'm not even going to quarrel with you."

A long time went by. Maybe it seemed like it was longer than it was, but I was gripped by the fear that he might ignore me. Then came the one word, "Why?"

"Today Papa and I had a talk, just the two of us." I said it rather proudly. "He told me that brothers ought to love one another because their father loves them all. When they hate one another and will not work together it only messes everything up and it breaks the hearts of their father and mother."

"Yeah, but you don't want to do things like I want to do

'em. What about that?"

"That's easy. You do 'em like you want to unless Papa tells you not to, and I'll do 'em the way I want to unless he tells me not to. We'll let Papa be the judge, and I won't judge you and don't you judge me. Maybe both ways are all right, yours and mine, as long as Papa and Mama love us both."

"Are you not going to throw clods at me anymore when I don't hoe the beans like you want me to? What about that?"

"Do you throw clods at people you really love? No, you don't. I won't even hit you if you don't help get the potato bugs off the vines. From now on, I am not afraid or worried and I just don't have to hit anyone who doesn't do things like I do. I'll just let you be you, and I'll be me, and we'll belong to each other because Papa and Mama loved us and wanted us. Is it a deal?"

"It's a deal!"

"Let's shake on it." Our two hands met in the darkness. I took the hand of my brother in my hand and we shook on it. And inner peace brought sleep, a calm and undisturbed repose.

It was years later that I learned that what we had done was to make a covenant, a child-like covenant to receive one another as we had been received, in love. It was then the words came back to me, spoken when disciples were jealous of one another and seeking special favor and recognition, and a little child was set in their midst. "Except you repent and become as a little child, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." And when I think of that I still reach out my hand, even though it is in the dark, groping for the hand of my brother and ready to say, "It's a deal, I love you!" *You see, I'm not afraid anymore!*

The God in Chains

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Mission Journal

In that era designated by one of our more famous poets as “the elder days of art,” the fertile minds of the Greeks populated the universe with gods and goddesses, conjured up out of the mists of superstition which hung like the fog of death over the civilized world. Faith accepts the concept that God made man in his own image, but primeval ignorance assumes that man can make gods in his own image.

As no stream can rise above the fountain which gives it birth, not even gods can transcend their creators, so the natural and artificial deities were endowed with all the tragic failures and vices to which fallen man had become heir. Thus the gods lusted and fought, hated and destroyed with all the fury which was projected by imagination to the cloud-wreathed courts on the brow of Olympus.

As an introduction to my principle theme I want to mention one of the gods who was somewhat of an oddity. He loved men, whom it was said he created from the dust of the ground. Prometheus, whose name means “Forethought,” was the brother of Epimetheus, “Afterthought,” who spent his life repenting of mistakes he should have avoided. The brothers belonged to the mythical race of Titans and Prometheus looked with compassion on mankind doomed to live in a world of cold and darkness. Risking the jealousy and hostility of Zeus, he stole

fire from heaven and conveyed it to earth in a hollow reed.

In revenge, Zeus chained Prometheus to a rock on the highest crag of Mount Caucasus. Each day a vulture with curved beak gnawed and tore away his liver. Each night it grew back again. Thus was signified the impossibility of the grim symbol of death triumphing over the life of the gods. The suffering of Prometheus as one who brought life and light to the world of forlorn humanity caught the fancy of poets of all ages, and his lot became the theme of literature from Aeschylus' great tragic drama, *Prometheus Bound*, written in 472 B.C., to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, written in A.D. 1319, in which the shackled giant is made to say:

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears

Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains

Eat with their burning cold into my bones.

Heaven's winged hound, polluting from thy lips

His beak in poison not his own, tears up

My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,

The ghostly people of the realm of dreams,

Mocking me. . . .

How fortunate it is that we may know the true and living God and not be condemned to wander through the mental aisles of fable and fantasy. We serve one who, as the Eternal Word, actually spoke man into being from the dust of the ground, and who, when he saw man dwelling in a realm of darkness and despair, left the glory world to share his lot of suffering. He brought light, for it was said, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shines in the darkness and the

darkness is powerless to overcome it.” He brought fire, for he said, “I have come to fling fire upon the earth, and how I wish that it were already kindled.”

I am concerned that he also is chained! But his links were not forged by a jealous God. Rather, he is chained by those to whom he has brought life, those who profess to be his friends. Not upon some lonely mountain height, but in the midst of the teeming world which he seeks to save, we have fettered him with chains of our own contriving, and he is inhibited and restrained because of our own tragic littleness, bigotry and intolerance.

We have chained him with our *traditions*. Confusing cultural contingencies with the divine will revealed through the holy apostles and prophets we have sought to perpetuate the human judgment of our fathers, and to “attempt the Future’s portals with the Past’s blood-rusted key,” to borrow a phrase from James Russell Lowell. We have measured God’s will by the way we have done, rather than testing what we have done by way of God’s will. It has not been so much a matter of what is the divine purpose, as what has been our prescribed policy.

Skeletal hands reaching out from the sepulcher have throttled every new approach, and condemned us to treading the tortuous trails of yesterday even when they have led us away from the crying needs of today! We have mistaken wallowing in the old ruts with walking in the old paths. Candor forces us to admit that while we have often failed to restore the spirit of the primitive saints, we have been remarkably successful in recapturing the spirit of the primitive Pharisees.

It is true that while deploring a liturgical approach to God, we have developed a ritual, and any departure from it is regarded as a betrayal of the word of God. Our songs are often stereotyped, our prayers patterned and our praise programmed. If the Holy Spirit wanted to infiltrate our worship, and there is no clear sign that he does, he would have to apply for the

privilege and might be assigned a five-minute spot right after the offering on the first Sunday of next month.

Our position makes us look askance at our young people who urge us not to get so uptight about sharing with God and to “hang loose and let Jesus put it altogether.” We drive from us those who would pry open the windows looking in the direction of glory and let the fresh winds of heaven waft away the musty odor of our monastic staleness.

I trust it will not startle you to tell you that we have lost Jesus in the Bible and lost the Bible in the church. We must now rescue Jesus from the Bible or become like the scribes and Pharisees to whom Jesus said, “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but their purpose is to testify of me. And you will not come unto me that you might have life.”

Life does not come from searching the scriptures. The scriptures do not produce life eternal. The scriptures are a gift from God just as life is a gift from God. We have confused the love letters with the Lover; the Captain of our salvation with his orders; the fodder with the Shepherd; and the prescription with the Physician. We have eclipsed the Son of God with the wisdom of the sons of men. And by worshipping the scriptures we often end up with a head full of quotations and a heart empty of Jesus. Of what use is a road map if we are not going home to him? The prodigal could have been preoccupied with a road map and remained in the pig pen!

We must recover the Bible from the church. The people of God have carried the word of God captive. Once more the book of God has been lost in the temple of God. It has been buried beneath a pile of partisan practices, cultural customs, institutional inventions, doctrinal deductions and sectarian sham. Traditions are like parasite plants which grow up and entwine themselves around the trunk of truth, and appear, at

first, to support it rather than the opposite. Left alone they sap the strength and multiply their foliage until life is stifled and the tree deadened by what once appeared to be innocent and harmless development.

We have chained him with our *prejudices*. Prejudice is the progeny begotten by ignorance and conceived by pride. It confronted Jesus upon every turn. It motivated James and John to suggest calling down fire from heaven to consume a Samaritan village in a holocaust of vengeance. It flung a cringing woman, whose immoral liaison was interrupted, down at his feet to see if he would sentence her to death beneath a barrage of stones. Its blinded frenzy drove nails into his hands and feet and a pang of passion into his pulsating heart.

The kingdom of heaven has been victimized by prejudice almost from its inception. Prejudice provoked the murmuring of the Hellenists against the Hebrews in the community of saints in Jerusalem. It joined hands with legalism in a vain attempt to enforce circumcision upon the Gentiles at Antioch. It turned worshippers at the temple into a riotous mob seeking to rend the limbs of Paul from his body because they saw a foreigner with him on a street in Jerusalem.

Prejudice is like the nine-headed Hydra of Argos which Hercules undertook to slay only to learn that each time he cut off a head two more grew in its place. After all the centuries which have passed we must still contend with racial, cultural, social, political, ethnic and religious prejudice, and the "holier-than-thou" attitude, which injects poison into the very body of Christ and renders it incapable of that universal love which prompted God to send his son into the world.

Prejudice is the clabbering of the milk of human kindness. It is a cataract growth of slimy false pride over the eye of the inner man. It makes a caricature of the cross of Christ and converts the church from a company of the compassionate into a

hold of hostility and even hatred. No one who walks in the steps of our Lord can do so while supported by a mental crutch of racial, sexual or social superiority, for “in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither male nor female, neither bond nor free, but we are all one in Christ Jesus.” And in the context of the agony of our own day we may add, “There is neither black nor white, neither red nor yellow.” We are all one!

Nothing is more detrimental to the fulfillment of the ultimate purpose of God than the false assumption that Jesus is a white man’s savior and that the faith once delivered is an export product of western culture. We must constantly stifle the vagrant thought left over from our carnal yesterdays that men are saved by our sacrifice rather than by his. The church is not the dispenser of grace but the recipient of it. We do not take Christ to the world for he came to it before we did. We can only point to him and his greatness while resisting the ever-present temptation to point to ourselves.

We will never destroy prejudice by delivering diatribes against it from the pulpit. Ignorance is eliminated by teaching and not by sermonizing. And education in both grace and knowledge of the truth is the antidote for all of our prejudices. Ben Hecht, in “A Guide for the Bedeviled” made the statement: “Prejudice is a raft onto which the shipwrecked mind clammers and paddles to safety.” And Charlotte Bronte, in her novel *Jane Eyre* wrote, “Prejudices, it is well known, are most difficult to eradicate from the heart whose soil has never been loosened or fertilized by education; they grow there firm as weeds among stones.”

Jesus deliberately moved into a world filled with selfishness and seething with prejudice. And he moved through that world challenging its smugness and status symbols. His parables were like dynamite to entrenched greed, and like piercing darts driven deep into the fat under-belly of social tyranny and inequality. In view of this it is to our shame that those who lead

in the fight for justice and equality before the law are frequently outside the pale of discipleship, driven by a sense of humanitarian concern rather than of reverence for his will “who made of one blood all nations of men.” Our love should be as deep as the love of God, our mercy should be as wide as the mercy of God, our grace should be as broad as the grace of God.

We chain him with our *sectarianism*. We are the heirs of a noble ideal. The historical movement which gave us being was born in the hearts of devout men, most of them within the Presbyterian background, who could no longer tolerate the toils of partisan bondage. They were, to quote the words of one of them, “aware from sad experience, of the heinous nature and pernicious tendency of religious controversy among Christians; tired and sick of the bitter jarrings and janglings of a party spirit.” As a result of this feeling they inaugurated what another of them called “a project to unite the sects, or rather, the Christians in all of the sects.”

Their earnest attempt was frequently met with scoffing and jeers. Boorish roughs in frontier settlements sometimes sought to break up their gatherings. Violence reared its ugly head upon some occasions, and hardship and suffering were the daily lot of those who sought to propagate the idea that men could be Christians only without allowing themselves to be herded and driven into exclusivistic corrals or branded with a mark of allegiance to a sect or faction.

The dream was magnificent. The vision was glorious. But Satan is always lurking in the purple shadows, ready to move in and divert any reform into another sect, and to betray its adherents into becoming more intolerant than those whom they vainly sought to reform. That we are not altogether free from the nauseating taint of the party spirit, which is a work of the flesh, is evident “at sundry times and in diverse manners.” Although we may feel that we have fled from Babylon and returned to Jerusalem, the years of bondage have left their mark

upon us, and we still unthinkingly use “the speech of Ashdod” which we brought with us from the land of spiritual exile.

I still go to meetings where men arise during open forums to ask, “How do you find the attitude of ‘your brethren’ as compared to that of ‘our brethren’?” Regardless of the attitude of anyone else, the attitude of such a questioner is sectarian. Like Peter on the morning before the crucifixion, his speech betrays him. So long as we think in terms of “our brethren” and “your brethren” we are still infected with the virus of sectarianism. The family of God is not divided into ours and yours, but it is one, and it is his!

The Jews forgot that they belonged to God and concluded that God belonged to them. The result was a selfish spirit of superiority which severed them from the desperate agony of a world dying in need of their witness of God. Instead of acting as leaven to the masses of mankind they spent precious time quarrelling and bickering over political and theological points of view, until they were splintered and fragmented into all types of sects by the time “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men.” It is significant that he allied himself with no Jewish party and wore no sectarian label.

We must never lose sight of the danger of hiding ourselves from the very world we are called upon to penetrate with our witness. If we build walls to shelter us from contact with those who are outside, it is those behind the walls and not those outside them who are the prisoners. One of the tragedies of our day is that we have allowed fear to drive us into seclusion where we have no contact with others who believe in the one Lord. Our buildings become monasteries and retreats, and we resign ourselves to holding the fort instead of storming it.

It is time for us to rise above the provincial thinking which is evident in so many areas and to recapture the concept of the body of Christ. That body is greater than any party, sect or

segment, and greater than all of them taken together. It is mightier than any movement within it and that includes the restoration movement. Thomas Campbell did not restore the church. It had never ceased to exist. Just as there has never been a time since the original creation that the breath of life has not flowed in and out of the nostrils of man, so there has not been a time since the new creation when the body of Christ has not been pulsating with the life of the spirit. A body cannot die as long as its head is alive!

Jesus has never been a head without a member, a shepherd without a sheep, a king without a subject, or a teacher without a disciple. It is true that if some of these were with us now we would not receive them and would no doubt disown them, but that is proof of our own sectarianism and not of theirs. It still remains true that "The Lord knoweth them that are his." I am persuaded that God has children upon this earth who never heard of Alexander Campbell. The term "restoration movement" would strike no responsive chord in their hearts. We are not joined to Jesus because we are in the restoration movement but because we are in the body of which he is the head. In the restoration movement I can serve the body of Christ, but the body of Christ need not serve in the restoration movement.

Restoration movements come and go! They rise and wane! They flourish and disappear! But the community of the redeemed ones goes on forever. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. If we allow this restoration movement to fail in uniting the Christians among the sects, if we fall out by the way and end up as quarrelsome sects, God can wipe us off the map and start another historical movement. He is not out of Presbyterians yet! If we decline our destiny and prostitute our purpose we can be lost among the welter of multiplying sects, but God's purpose will still triumph. He will bring forth judgment unto victory! He will not fail, nor fail his will!

From our fortunate stance, two-thousand years this side of the invasion of the earth by the Prince of peace, we can glance retrospectively upon the ancient Greeks and their myths and fantasies, with a smile of condescension. We can feel a sense of compassion for brilliant philosophers who engaged in reciting tales in the market-place of a god chained to a rocky promontory because of his love for mankind. And as we read dramatic poems about the agony of Prometheus struggling to be free, we can be smug in our knowledge that a god cannot be chained.

But let us not be too smug and forget that the apostle to the Gentiles wrote that men can hold back or restrain the truth by their unrighteousness.

Jesus left the ecstasy of glory to share the agony of our suffering. He came into the stinking and wretched slave quarters where the lash of the taskmaster of sin lacerated our souls. He unlocked the clanking chains clamped on our hearts, and set us free. I plead with you now to liberate him from the fetters we may fasten upon him within our factional walls. Roll away the stone from the door of our parties which we have transformed into sepulchers and let the living Lord come forth. Let the world hear again those reassuring words, "It is I! Be not afraid!"

My Voice Belongs to Him

Mission Journal 6 (January 1976): 3

Mission Journal

On December 1, I delivered the final shipment of our little journal *Mission Messenger* at the dock of the main postoffice in downtown Saint Louis. The nine stuffed mail sacks held almost 8,600 copies. In the sack bearing the label “Foreign— Mixed” were papers which would eventually reach every continent. As I climbed back into my automobile and headed for home the curtain was drawn on 37 years of editorial effort. Behind me were 444 monthly issues containing 7,104 pages. Most of these I had written myself.

Mission Messenger was always a family project. Our only office was our home. It was also our wrapping and mailing room. Nell prepared the thousands of papers for mailing each month and knew the names of hundreds of subscribers. They were like neighbors and friends. The letters we received from them were often warm and intimate. Many hundreds of them wrote pleading with us not to discontinue the paper, but the decision to do so had been reached after months of prayer resulting in a firm commitment to the Father.

The paper began as a news medium for a party in the Restoration movement sparked by Thomas Campbell, Barton Warren Stone, and other Presbyterians. I was reared in that party and like the earlier adherents of the other two dozen such factions, we regarded ours as the one holy, catholic and apostolic

church of God upon the earth. We constituted “the loyal church” and all others were either sectarians or extremists. The latter we branded as hobbyists. Sectarians were those who had something we opposed; hobbyists were those who opposed something we had.

The paper reflected the attitude which is spawned by a legalistic concept of the divine-human relationship. It was arrogant, intolerant, and exclusivist. It contained challenges to brethren who made tests of fellowship out of their opinions and interpretations as we did out of ours. It chronicled debates with them which we always won in our accounts, and which they never failed to win in theirs. As I read the older files it seems incredible to me that I wrote much of what I see there. The ignorance of God’s nature and purpose reflected in my thinking is so manifest that I would be frightened by it if I had not long ago confessed both to God and my brethren and humbly asked forgiveness for it.

The time when the paper was completely transformed is well-documented. Papers change because their editors change. Sometimes the change is gradual and hardly perceptible in its origin. In my case it was sudden and traumatic. It can be dated from a crisis experience in a distant land, a confrontation with the living Christ which forced me into a complete re-examination of the sacred Scriptures and resulted in a thorough reversal of my whole approach to the life in the Spirit.

Space will not allow for a lengthy discussion of all of the alterations essential for me to purge my conscience, but I should like to mention a few. I became convinced that no party, segment or faction in our Restoration movement was the kingdom of God’s dear Son to the exclusion of all others. From this, I was led to see that no movement in the body of Christ can ever be equated with the body. That body is greater than any movement, or all of them put together. We made a tragic error in regarding our historical movement as “the Lord’s church,” as the brethren

so quaintly refer to it. The sheep are still scattered over the sectarian hills. We do not have them all in any of our many corrals, and have actually driven many of them farther away from us.

From Dr. George Campbell of Edinburgh, as well as from Alexander Campbell and others, I learned to distinguish between the gospel proclaimed to aliens to enroll them as disciples, and the apostolic doctrine taught to the enrollees to train them to become better citizens of the commonwealth of faith. The gospel consists of historical facts related to the person of Jesus. It is the Good News of what God did for us in his Son. It was fully heralded on the first Pentecost after his resurrection. Not a word was ever added to the gospel. Since it is the gospel which brings us into relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and with all others who are in that relationship, it is the gospel which creates fellowship. *Koinonia*, fellowship, is the sharing of a common life, and in the new covenant context it is the sharing of eternal life, the life of God.

As I came to understand fellowship in its divinely-revealed perspective it became apparent why division and fragmentation of the saints was such an evil. It was the result of carnality and immaturity, a work of the flesh, and a sin against the head of the body. An unbiased study of its causes convinced me that it was generally the result of a lack of understanding of the covenant relationship, which is not based upon a written code of law but upon the indwelling Spirit.

A better understanding of the grace of God led me to regard the new covenant Scriptures, not as the covenant which was written upon the heart, but a compilation of love letters written by and to the covenant people. These writings, divinely given to meet human needs and to act as guidelines for expression of the divine nature within were not intended to constitute a written code nor to furnish a meticulous pattern or blueprint. The faith does not consist of Jesus pointing us to a

book, but of the book pointing us to Jesus.

As the implications of this began to filter into my heart the written word became more precious. I studied it with deeper fervency and appreciation. When I realized the folly of employing the written word to thwart the very purpose of the Living Word, I examined anew the passages we had quoted to justify and condone division. I found we had misconstrued every one of them. My review of our mistakes in interpretation resulted in a series of studies published in book form under the title *The Twisted Scriptures*. My latest volume strikes more fully at the heart of our problem. It is called *The Death of the Custodian* and deals with the change which took place when the law fulfilled its appointed role in bringing us unto Christ.

For the past 15 years I have been crossing over our partisan lines and ignoring our sectarian barriers, going wherever God opened up a door and bearing witness of what His mercy has done in my life. Not only have I spoken to convocations of all the segments of brethren in the framework of the historical movement set in motion by Stone and the Campbells, but I have addressed conventions made up of evangelicals and ecumenicists as well. There is not always a sharp differentiation between them.

It is out of my experience (perhaps the word should be plural), I venture to make a few observations based upon trends which seem to be everywhere apparent. We have come full circle now, and are living in a pagan culture which, in every major aspect, is identical with the world into which Jesus made His advent and which Paul, the unparalleled evangelist, penetrated with the news of the divine investiture of the flesh. Looked at from a morbid standpoint we might become discouraged by the apparent failure of the faith, but, as I view it, we now have one of the greatest opportunities ever afforded a generation. The faith which centers around the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and conveys hope of a life beyond, was made for times like

these!

The old faith which was delivered once for all times, provides the only anchor for storm-tossed earthen vessels, and we must reaffirm our conviction in its validity. I am firmly and unalterably committed to it and the sacred Scriptures which define and describe it. But I am quite convinced that our strategy of penetration calls for a 20th century thrust, rather than a 19th century emphasis. The old mottoes and cliches no longer serve any useful purpose. The brethren simply mouth them without realizing what they were originally intended to convey. My own plea is for “Renewal through recovery— of the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power.” This appeal seems to make sense to every group to which I have presented it.

We have been confusing a 19th century undertaking with the first century faith. The result is the spread of confusion rather than calm. We have been cast in the role of piece-makers rather than that of peacemakers. But most of our strife has resulted from undue emphasis upon opinions and traditions accruing from the movement. They are cultural and historical. They are temporal rather than eternal. If we can launch a movement as did our forebears and divest ourselves of the barnacles which have fastened themselves upon the former movement, we may once again become “a project to unite the Christians in all of the sects.”

In spite of the pessimism of a great many brethren who think nothing can be done to pierce the thick shell of sectarianism surrounding the various parties among us, I am very optimistic. I think we are standing on the threshold of a genuine spiritual breakthrough. It is delayed in coming by fear, which is a fruit of the legalistic spirit, and by an unwillingness to endure attack and assault from factional journals. But we are rearing and educating consecrated young people who do not have our hangups and these will provide a better climate in the future. While there are a great many signs of better days in the

making, I want to mention only a few.

(1) *A restored vision.* Every ideal must first exist as an idea. There can be no tangible creation which is not preceded by a mental image. We are today exactly where our thinking has brought us. We will be tomorrow exactly where our thinking takes us. If we would change our state, we must change our thinking; and it is changing! Once brethren thought in terms of division. They had but one approach to differences— debate; and but one approach to unresolved problems— division. We are divided because men thought and proclaimed division. But now the concept of a united body is again in many hearts, and as this dream becomes clothed with flesh and blood we will see a tremendous change for the better.

(2) *Dissatisfaction with the status quo.* There is a growing recognition that division only multiplies our problems rather than solving them. It only encourages and enshrines the unwholesome attitudes which led to the fragmentation originally. We will not accomplish the divine purpose by building walls or widening chasms. We cannot fracture ourselves into fraternity, untie ourselves into unity, nor divide ourselves into oneness. The sheer imbecility of the position into which we have been lured by Satan is coming to be seen for what it is, and a lot of people are fed up with it.

(3) *Increasing consciousness of brotherly love.* We have gone through great wars in this century and have experienced what hostility and hatred can do. There is but one dynamic which can draw us together and keep us together in Christ Jesus, and that is love. We have come to realize that love creates its own sense of values in persons and we must love those whom we cannot like. The love which God manifested toward us is so powerful it cut through the trappings of enmity and alienation, and when hearts are opened up so the Spirit can pour out that love, it will transcend artificial and partisan barriers and make rational discussion possible. When we can sit down around the council

table, not as warriors from separate tribes, but as brethren in a common cause, many of our problems will be solved.

(4) *Maturity in the spiritual realm.* Such maturity recognizes public partisan debates on an emotional and personal level as offering no solution, but rather aggravating and exacerbating the problem. We have never debated a single sect out of existence. No one ever wins a public debate between brethren. If division was not present before the debate, it will always be the result of it. Partisan debate is a childish and silly approach to our problems as a people. We must discover a spiritual alternative to it.

(5) *A favorable climate in the entire religious world.* Never before during my sojourn on earth have I experienced such an eagerness to study the written word and to know the will of God. I have immersed more Jews and Catholics into the blessed names of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the last five years than ever before in my life. Jesus has moved back into the university campus, and groups of brilliant and incisive young people are examining his claims over their lives. I meet with many of these in “rap sessions” which continue through most of the night. Recently Nell and I were invited to come to a convent housing 162 nuns and to spend the entire day conversing with them. I saw many of these women weep as we talked to them, and when we had to leave the “Mother General” cheerfully agreed to allow them to come five at a time to our home to continue to study and pray with us about the will of God for their lives.

(6) *We are arriving at a correct analysis of the nature of our difficulty.* This means that we are rejecting childish oversimplification upon one hand and are no longer on a “slogan trip” where we try to get the wonderful, spiritual universe into a little box of our own construction. At the same time we are refusing to be daunted or intimidated by morbid pessimism created by the gravity of the situation into which we have fallen. Our task is not an easy one, but neither is it an impossible one.

Jesus did not pray for something unattainable. Those who believe in him through the apostolic testimony can be one, and I intend to dedicate my life to helping make them so.

(7) *Meetings involving brethren from all different factions.* Such gatherings are being held in every section of the land. True, there are not as many as there should be, but the number is increasing. For years I have been involved in meetings where representatives of all parties and factions can congregate as equals and with proper respect for each other as brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ. I have never seen a truly untoward incident occur. Of course, brethren who think of themselves exclusively as “the Lord’s church” and who regard all who differ with them as apostates, sometimes come to try and wreak havoc. But that kind of attitude is dated. It works its own rebuke! Men want to study and reason together as equals. They want to strive to assist in discovering a solution, and not pollute the atmosphere with bitter controversy and partisan bigotry.

I am not a prophet of doom! I am thrilled to be alive in this wonderful age! I intend to continue taking the message of “peace on earth to men of goodwill” all over our land. I refuse to be bought off or scared off! It is true that one phase of my approach has ended. It represents a good chunk out of my earthly life. But whatever I have left I intend to invest in his cause. With the shield of faith held before me and the sword of the Spirit in my right hand I shall press the battle for peace on every front. Those who have been living in the happy anticipation that with the cessation of my paper my voice would be stilled are in for a real disappointment. My voice belongs to Him and I shall continue to lift it up until He silences it. I eagerly pray for all who read this and commend you unto his love!

The Movement That Stopped

Mission Journal 7 (January 1983): 7

Mission Journal

I left the Lutheran Church, the church of the Reformation, when I was eleven years old. I was baptized in a clear stream flowing through a pasture. And I became allied with one faction of “The Church of Christ.” The thought that one could be a Christian, and a Christian only, appealed to my childish mind. It took years of study and thought before I was ready to admit that I had become a “Church of Christ Christian.” I was affiliated with a denomination in the religious complex, and I was a member of one of the smallest sects in that denomination. I came to that conclusion through agonizing prayer and with tears streaming down my cheeks. And I wondered why I could not have died in my former ignorance.

When I was much younger and more naive, I felt that the “Restoration Movement” was a direct interposition of God in the affairs of men. Barton W. Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott were providentially raised up in this new world to lead us out of the wilderness and into the promised land. I now know that this movement was only one of many. There have been such movements in every century since the third. The one which eventually terminated in the “Church of Christ” was only one of sixteen which started in the fifty years between 1775, the beginning of the American Revolution, and 1825, the year that the Scottish mill owner Robert Owens bought New Harmony, Indiana, for an experiment in “Utopian

Socialism,” an inglorious failure.

Walter Scott, the Campbells, and Barton Warren Stone were men caught up in the affairs of their times. Men of destiny enmeshed in a web of causes and effects. Forces over which they had no control were impelling them. God was over them, as he was over Martin Luther and John Huss, and as he is over us in our generation. The French Revolution in its godlessness, the Second Great Awakening, the restless spirit of the frontier, the soul hunger of illiterate pioneers, the creedalism of the religious establishment: all of this and much more combined to make these men, and many others who preceded and succeeded them, leaders in freedom of thought. Freedom was in the air! Liberty was the thrilling watchword of the day!

Thomas Campbell did not start out to create a new church and certainly not restore the one for which Jesus died. He knew that it had never ceased to exist. In the *Declaration and Address*, which Robert Richardson later credited with being the formal and actual announcement of the reformation, appear these words: “That this Society [the Washington Association] by no means considers itself a Church, nor does at all assume to itself the powers peculiar to such a society; nor do the members, as such, consider themselves to stand connected in that relation; nor as at all associated for the purpose of Church association.”

Although it will do no good, one cannot help but wonder what would have happened by now if our fathers in the faith had stedfastly remained true to their idea. Would those who were dedicated to the concept of perpetual and ongoing reform have been used as leaven and salt amidst all the divided parties of our day? As so many other reforms, our own— begun by noble men and motivated by what they thought was necessity but which actually was fear— terminated in the formation of another denomination. There was no way the church for which Jesus died could be crammed into the “Restoration Movement,” or any other kind of movement originating with men. So the

movement became a church and passed itself off as the church of Christ, restored in all of its pristine glory, beauty, and order.

The day the movement became a church, that day it ceased to be a movement. To denominate means “to name, to give a title to, to apply a name to distinguished from others in the same class.” As frequently occurs in the best of families, there was some confusion and a great deal of argument over what to denominate the infant. Some held out for Christian, some for Disciples of Christ. After years of wrangling and three major cleavages, we have, with still some infighting, settled upon three titles: Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, Churches of Christ. One can read these denominations upon letterheads, envelopes, cornerstones, and “on the lintels over the doors.” They are also exhibited in the yellow pages of the telephone directories, isolated from each other.

With the denomination a new sect was born. Immediately open season was declared upon it by every other sect, for every sect is aggressive when it is first born. It is like a wasp, bigger and more apt to attack when first hatched out than at any other time. The passage of the years brings a splintering of the sect. Then its guns begin to be trained inward upon its own defectors and dissidents. It has always been that way.

However, at first the sect stands up in its swaddling clothes and challenges all of the giants around it. So every other sect, whether it was begotten of spiritual, moral, ethical, or national principles rushes to debate. In some respects this is an exercise in futility, serving only to spread and disseminate the virus of hatred. We have never debated a single sect out of existence. Even the ones which were debated by Alexander Campbell still exist in much greater numbers and almost as many divisions as “the restoration movement.”

When the movement ceased, it became a monument. One need only read the *Declaration and Address* to realize how true

this is. A monument is fixed. It is not going anywhere. It is a tribute to the courage and heroism of those who died for an ideal. Men visit it to lay wreaths upon it, to recount the victories of yesteryear, and to wipe away their tears.

Why not get the movement off dead center and moving again? I have sad news. Never in the history of the world has this ever been accomplished. Movements are rooted in history, and history moves on when movements grind slowly and methodically to a halt. We no longer live in 1804 or 1809. Few of us know anything at all about Robespierre or Talleyrand. We are now concerned with Andropov, Mitterand, or Yasser Arafat. The earthly frontiers have disappeared. It is time for a “Third Great Awakening.”

What we need to do is not to bemoan the passing of yesterday, but to face the call of the future. The only way we can do that is to be responsible in the present. In short, we need a new reformation: one that is grounded on the rock but geared to the times. The universal call today is for renewal. Let us then proclaim renewal through recapture of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. A reform movement today must speak to the needs and employ the language of the people who live now. We are not dealing with illiterate dwellers in log cabins in the wilderness. There has been an intellectual breakthrough. The new world is no longer America. The old world is no longer Europe. We are fast becoming the old world. The horizons have broadened.

We do not need a new *Declaration and Address*. Let us retain the truths we gleaned from it, but let us now apply the new truths we have discovered in the divine revelation to the new problems of today. “New occasions teach new duties / Time makes ancient good uncouth / We must upward then and onward / Who would keep abreast of truth.” We can continue to strive and fight over the inherited divisions growing out of our misconceptions of reform until we all go down in the pit

together. It is time for us to adjust our sights and aim for the stars. Let us once again seek to “unite the Christians in all of the sects.” Perhaps the place to begin is with the recognition that they are still there.

Invading the City

Mission Journal 4 (October 1983): 9

Mission Journal

More than three years ago I gave three Sunday evening talks on the same theme. I was driven by a divine compulsion as I made them. Using Abraham as an example, I called the series “Looking For a City.” I will not bore you with the details. Summarizing briefly, I traced the urbanization of our culture from the frontier, through ruralization, to the present. I pointed out that this was the path toward loss of virility. It was the road which inevitably led to rot and decay. I affirmed that Jesus would not flee to the suburbs with their lovely flowers and manicured lawns. He would turn back into the city. He was anointed to preach to the poor. My talks fell as flat as a pancake. No one stepped forward to volunteer for the new adventure. It was too radical and revolutionary for those of us who had been reared in middle-class homes.

Oak Hill Chapel is small. We have about a hundred in attendance. As our building filled, we went through all of the institutional phases. We checked on enlargement of our building. We considered trading it for a larger and much more beautiful building in the midst of a stable community. We were challenged to unite our forces with another congregation in an elite residential area. None of these caught fire. It was as if an unseen hand was closing doors to keep us from “tearing down our barns and building greater.” Finally, the congregation took a vote. By a very slim majority we decided to stay where we were

and form a support group for an inner city attempt. I had “laid an egg” three years before. Now it had begun to hatch. As usual, God’s incubator was not governed by man’s calendar.

Two of us, a young attorney and myself, began to look for sites. We drove up and down dirty and disreputable streets. We investigated every vacant store building as well as everything else that held any promise. I talked with two Catholic priests. They were favorable and offered to help. We had previously taken two van loads of clothing to Hosea House, their distribution center for the naked and homeless. We were tempted to purchase a place in use by Grace and Peace Fellowship. They were abandoning it after several years of the same kind of effort in which we would engage. We went there for a basket dinner one Sunday. We analyzed their mistakes and resolved to avoid them.

One day as I was cruising the streets, I saw the spot. As Brigham Young, when he surveyed the desert of Utah from the mountain, I said, “This is the place.” It was a former tavern and house of prostitution. Upstairs there had been fifteen plywood partitioned cribs to which the girls took their customers whom they had solicited in the tavern downstairs. Someone in the community had put the torch to it. It stood a boarded-up, fire-gutted shell for many months. When the “headache ball” was about to swing, a builder examined it, found it to be structurally sound, and started to rehabilitate it.

When I first saw it, there were three government-subsidized apartments above it; but the downstairs was still a shambles. We rented it. Since that time it has been remodeled and fixed up. As I write this, we have met there for five weeks. The girls have made and hung beautiful curtains. Two pots of flowers hang in the windows. A stove, refrigerator, and double sink have been installed. Soon, posters with a Christian message and pictures will adorn the walls to give it a living-room effect. A sign will go up next week: It will read: “The Cornerstone— An

Adventure in Christian Fellowship— by Oak Hill Chapel.”

We are at last in the agora— the marketplace. The other evening I sat and counted the cars going through the intersection of Utah and Ohio Streets. In forty-five minutes there were a hundred. We are but a short distance from Soulard Market, the oldest outdoor market west of the Mississippi. A few blocks down the street are the old DeMenil and Lemp Homes, old world relics of the past century when Saint Louis was the home of many breweries. They have been swallowed up by Anheuser-Busch, the acrid fumes of whose brewing mash, flavored by hops, assails our nostrils as we meet.

A part of our carefully thought-out strategy called for us to infiltrate the area. We wanted to avoid revivals and other hard-core attacks. We distributed a thousand flyers in the vicinity of Oak Hill Chapel informing people of our plans and asking their prayers. We felt we could do no harm by taking them into our confidence. We met together for four months every Sunday afternoon while the place was being rented and readied. The attendance was sporadic. The interest was disappointing. Finally, we were ready to start. We planned to begin with meetings on Saturday evenings. We began with twenty-eight persons. Ten of them were non-members.

Since that time we have started a quilting session on Thursday afternoon, followed by a meeting for teen-agers on Thursday evening. Our next venture will be a free blood pressure checkup and a Vacation Bible Study for children. We are surrounded with a swarm of children. They play on the street in front of and to the side of our building. The great majority have had no exposure to any spiritual training. They exist in a world of profanity and abuse. Television is their chief educator. It is obvious that God planted us squarely in their midst. How to reach them for Jesus is our biggest question.

When you move into the inner city, you must be prepared

for three attitudes. *Those who are religiously inclined resent you.* You are an intruder upon their turf. Like an old dog who is dying, they snap at the friendly hand extended to help. I have already visited all the churches in the area. One is a Lutheran Church with lovely medieval type facilities. It is Missouri Synod. That means it is exclusive. A few years ago it numbered 450 parishioners. Now it does not register 150 on Sunday. It seeks to eke out its depleting income with rummage sales and fish fries. This is a contrived attempt to get the community to support something in which it does not believe. Men will spend for their stomachs while starving their minds.

The congregation is slowly tending toward the grave. Its Sunday school attracts five adults who meet in the study. There are six intermediates and four of high school age who come reluctantly. The average age of the communicants is nearly seventy. Many of these are possessed of an irascible German temper. When the congregation uses the new revised hymn book, which contains an occasional new chorus, they deliberately absent themselves. If they happen to be in the auditorium when a song is announced in the new books, they get up and stamp out. They would feel “right at home” with a lot of our members.

You must also be prepared to be coldly ignored. People walk by and pretend you are not there. You give them your most winsome greeting and they plow ahead, acting as if you are a department store dummy. They do not want their little world invaded. Worst of all are those who take a “wait and see” attitude. They have seen storefront groups come and go through the years. They have seen them make a big splurge. They have also watched them being hung up to dry after failure. They are not about to be sucked in by a fly-by-night bunch of do-gooders. But just as Jesus had to leave heaven to come and live among us, so we have to move in among those we are trying to reach. We have to share their joys and sorrows. There is no such thing as long-distance help.

I have just finished a door-to-door canvass of the area. I visited seven hundred homes using the storefront as a center. I found houses which had been in the same family a hundred years. These were well-kept, neat, and clean. I found other houses which were run-down, decrepit, filled with cockroaches, and rat-infested. I saw half-naked children living in decadent apartments unfit for habitation. And it came to me one day as I was climbing the stairs to the third-story apartments that the one word which sums up the Christian in the inner city is "vulnerable." This means capable of being wounded or injured. The word "vulture" is from the same root. It literally means "tearing apart." When Jesus came among us in the flesh, He literally became vulnerable. I'm not especially referring to physical injury, although to go into a culture where violence is a way of life increases the chances of it. I speak particularly of a lifestyle which figuratively drives a spear into your side.

In one morning I encountered four types of people I would never see at Oak Hill Chapel or in any other kind of religious structure or earthly "holy place." The first was a huge bearded man who had just been released from prison after serving half of a seven-year sentence. Since I purposely was not dressed up, he had no way of knowing I was a preacher. He thought of me as a friendly wanderer interested in his plight. He asked me if I had ever done time. He "fried my ears" with the language he used, but I realized it was all he had heard for almost four years. We talked for almost a half hour sitting on the steps. Even when I introduced him to Jesus, he still did not grow suspicious. He apparently thought of me as a harmless "Jesus freak."

A half block further on I saw an old man just sitting down on the curb with a cup of coffee and a doughnut which he had cadged. When I sat down beside him, he almost jumped out of his skin. I found that he was one of several thousand homeless who live in our city. He had slept the night before in a garage which he pointed out to me, but he had to vacate it at 5:30 a.m. The owner had given him permission to bed down in it provided

he was out of it by daylight. He was reluctant to talk. When I told him about heaven, he said he would swap his part of it for a plate of chicken and dumplings and a bottle of whiskey. But he turned out to be a neighborly soul when he found out that I was not a member of the “fuzz” and had no intention of “railroading him to the slammer.”

I turned the corner and came face to face with two prostitutes. The younger one had an obscenity printed on her sweat shirt which was hotter than the sun at its meridian. I talked to them and told them that I loved them not for anything they had to give but because I could introduce them to One who would teach them how to live in the Spirit and above the flesh. I quickly moved, without embarrassment, to Jesus and His love. I spoke of what He had done for me and of what He could do for them, handed both an invitation to our meetings, and walked on. I turned and looked back. Both of them were watching me intently. I said a silent prayer that if they came to our prayer meeting, the one would be moved to wear a different shirt.

The rest of the day I met older people characterized by one thing: hopelessness. Most of them feel trapped. Their older houses are like animal cages. They walk from one room to another, filled with fear of vandalism, sickness, and dying alone. As I talked to them of the Divine Presence in our lives, some of them brightened. It has been so many years since they worshiped that worship has been crushed out of them. One by one they have laid away their loved ones. Now they are awaiting the inevitable. They do not realize that I stopped on every front sidewalk and breathed a prayer for them.

That will be enough now. The Cornerstone is alive and well. On the second and third stories above it are families with rooms full of children. The other three corners are occupied by a dog-grooming place, a pizza joint, and an apartment building run by a blind man whose white cane can be heard tapping along the sidewalk. Our expensive project is occupied by some of

the finest Christian young people you could ever meet. I'll tell you about them later!

Itinerant Evangelists Meet in Amsterdam

Mission Journal 5 (November 1983): 15

Mission Journal

The modern Dutch nation owes its existence to William of Orange. This outstanding ruler, also called William the Silent, is known, even as our own George Washington, as “the father of his country.” In 1572, during his struggle with Alva, the Spaniard, he wrote to the governor of North Holland that no one should be hindered in preaching the Word of God. By 1577 religious freedom was enjoyed throughout the land. In 1584 William was murdered by a Catholic fanatic for the reward of 25,000 gold crowns offered by Philip II of Spain.

Almost four hundred years later the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists was called together in Amsterdam. The fruition of a dream which had long affected Billy Graham, it was the first such gathering in the history of the faith. It was remarkable for its sense of unity and destiny, a never-to-be-forgotten experience which will surely motivate those who participated as long as they live. It was noteworthy for its organization, the result of months of arduous planning and human labor. It was also a demonstration of spiritual power, the work of the Holy Spirit, which frequently brought a lump to the throat and tears to the eyes of those fortunate enough to be invited. All attendance was by invitation to guarantee that those from richer parts of the universe would not be preferred.

Approximately five thousand persons, representing 134 nations, were present for the ten days spent in the historic city. Thousands more had to be rejected because they could not meet the qualifications. There were archbishops and patriarchs in clerical garb, but they were virtually overshadowed by the thousands who came in shirt sleeves with their collars unbuttoned at the neck. Although the characteristic dress of the emerging countries of Africa, India, and the Far East lent color to the occasion, the costumes were little noticed as men in gray flannel suits engaged in earnest conversation with others who were black, brown, or yellow in color. Everyone was eager to help others in whatever way required.

Gathering in Formal Assembly

There were three kinds of formal meetings on the program: plenary sessions (the word plenary meaning “full and entire”), designated and optional workshops. The entire congregation assembled each morning at 8:30 for a session lasting from two to three hours and again at 7:30 in the evening for another two-and-a-half hours. Simultaneous translation was rendered in Spanish, Portuguese, French, Japanese, Mandarin, German, Arabic, Russian, and other languages as it became necessary.

Besides Billy Graham some of the speakers at the morning plenary sessions were Sir Marcus Loane of Australia; Rebecca Manley Pippert, author of “Salt Out of the Shaker;” Stephen Olford, founder of Encounter Ministries and former minister of Duke Street Baptist Church in Richmond, Surrey, England; Tom Houston, Director of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, England; Ravi Zacharias, born in India and currently a professor at Alliance Theological Seminary, Nyack, New York; Gottfried Osei-Mensah of Nairobi, Kenya, traveling secretary of the Pan-African Fellowship of Evangelical Students; and Alfredo Smith of the Bible Institute of Lima, Peru. Among

those addressing the evening sessions were Luis Palau, Bill Bright, Chuck Colson, Paul Yonggi Cho, Pat Robertson, and Leighton Ford.

Surprising as it may seem, *there was no sectarian emphasis*. Each of the speakers exalted Jesus as Lord. In his final speech Graham exhorted all of those present to drop their partisan cloaks, to pray for one another, and to emphasize the one body on earth composed of all the saved of the whole world. He received a deafening burst of applause.

Workshops (107 of them) beginning after the morning sessions were all dedicated to the task of training men in proclaiming the Good News, and especially in making disciples of those who respond to the proclamation. Each participant had made a choice of seven workshops before leaving home. For me, the one on how to deal with Marxism and the one on apologetics in a secular background were outstanding.

The first was conducted by men from Hungary, Cuba, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), Poland and Yugoslavia. They were preceded by the Archbishop of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Patriarch of the Armenian Orthodox Church, and the Metropolitan from Constantinople. The questions directed toward these were particularly penetrating and devastatingly direct. The room was filled with expatriates and exiles who were no longer afraid of harassment by the KGB. They held the feet of the orthodox churchmen to the fire. The translators were superb.

One thing became very apparent: the western world is the victim of the media and influenced greatly by it. But I was pleased to learn from some of the Baptists (a term generally applied to evangelicals behind the Iron Curtain) that some things are gradually improving. This was attributed to two things: the emphasis upon the Holy Spirit and the attitude of

young men and women who are willing to suffer imprisonment and death for faith in Jesus and hope of the hereafter. In answer to a question, the speaker from Cuba announced that there are 50,000 Christians in approximately 1,000 congregations. He said that while they are not permitted to engage in open-air meetings, they can hold evangelistic meetings in their buildings without interference.

The workshop on apologetics was conducted by Michael Green of St. Aldates, Oxford, England. I had read all of his books, finishing *The Day Death Died* just before leaving home. I was not disappointed. He is a clever and witty defender of the faith as becomes one who mingles with the sharply-honed and rapier-like minds of Oxford men. It was obvious that he is an admirer of C. S. Lewis and has drawn heavily upon the resources of the knowledge left as our heritage by this converted atheist.

He was the most challenging in his five suggestions for confronting modern secular man with the Good News. Deploring employment of devious methods which maneuver others into place for “the kill,” he recommends direct fencing in the open rather than shooting from ambush, for in the latter approach the cold steel of the Gospel may be lost. He also urged us to distinguish between a smoke screen and a real mental problem. He pointed out that if you shoot down a smoke screen, another will come up; but if you shoot down a genuine problem, it is gone forever.

Taking Jesus to the Beaches

One of the most overwhelming experiences was the opportunity to share Jesus with a pleasure-mad people on Sunday afternoon. Sixty-four buses carrying almost fifty persons each were assembled at the RAI Center, where the convention was being held. To facilitate the afternoon’s activities and to

make it easier language-wise, the Spanish and Portugese-speaking people were grouped together, those from the Far East were in another group, and the English-speaking delegates were in still another. I sat with a young Mennonite couple from France. The man had been reared a Catholic but left that church during his tour of duty with the French army. Upon his return home, feeling there must be a better way of settling difficulties than by shooting, he joined a traditional “peace church.” Currently, he is working with four small congregations of from ten to twenty members each in four villages of the French countryside.

Our destination was one of the beaches along the ocean. Our bus went by miles and miles of cars parked four deep along the road until finally we entered a large resort town wholly given over to pleasure. The women, thousands of them, were topless, and clad in the very briefest bikinis. A musical group had preceded us to prepare the way. A number of briefly-clad people were standing around them as they sang and testified of their faith in Jesus. We had all been instructed to leave our coats, wear no ties, and unbutton the top two buttons on our shirts, so we could more easily blend with the crowd on the street.

All of us were supplied with “The Gospel of John” in the Dutch vernacular to leave with those who were interested. I first approached three elderly people sitting on a bench gazing out across the ocean. Learning they did not speak English, I related to them in the few words of broken German that I know. Promising to read what John said, each received a book. I went next to a hotel porch where eight people were enjoying the vagrant ocean breeze. Finding an interpreter among them, I spoke about the Lord until one woman interfered. I gave out three more copies of the book and went and sat down with a young couple, Pieter and Astrid Van Marten, of Haarlem. They listened attentively, asked intelligent questions, took the book and my address.

Next, I decided to go where no one else was willing to go. There were over a hundred motorcycles parked with some of their owners standing beside them. Moving in among the Suzukis and Hondas, I spoke to the young men and asked them if they knew about Jesus. One of them wanted to know if I were a Jesus-freak. I told them of how much I owed Jesus and how much I wanted others to be saved. It was as if an unseen force was at work on them. They listened respectfully, and six of them took the books and promised to read them. Having one more copy of the “The Gospel of Johannes,” I flagged down two elderly women, sisters from Ireland and East Germany, and gave it to them.

As we returned to the city, different ones told of their experiences. It was a first for most of them, and they were excited about the results. But I had been fine-tuning myself by preaching to youthful drunks and drug addicts on Amsterdam Streets as well as in the inner city of St. Louis. It was for me a refreshing experience. I drank deeply of the Spirit that afternoon.

Meeting Person to Person

Equally as informative and inspiring as the formal program activities were the informal conversations and meetings that came about spontaneously. It was not at all unusual to find humble men clustered around a leader to ask questions and imbibe his learning. The evening meal provided a marvelous opportunity for give-and-take among the delegates. Each evening at the dinner with 5,000 people in two large dining rooms, I managed to pick a table with varied people from different parts of the world. One evening, as table companions I had a young man from Madagascar, one from India, one from Taiwan, a middle-aged Lutheran from West Germany, and a young man from Argentina. Speaking slowly enough that all could understand, I asked each of them two questions: one about

the nature of their work at home and one about the one thing that had impressed them most about the convention. Often the fluency and ease of the speakers registered high on the scale. However, this evening all agreed that what bordered on the miraculous to them was that people so diverse in birth, education, and surroundings had, by reading the same book, found the same Person, had given allegiance to Him, and could now meet in such a place as brothers.

In an impassioned appeal on the final night, Billy Graham quoted the words of Jesus about praying for all those who believed on Him through the apostolic testimony and urged those present to answer that prayer. *He pleaded with us not to leave as Methodists, Baptists, Anglicans, or Presbyterians, but to go to the uttermost parts of the earth whence we had come as members of one body, one family, and one flock.* There were tears in the eyes of the men who sat nearest to me. In a few days they would be back in the remote jungles of India, in the barrios of Brazil, or in remote rice paddies of the Far East. They would carry in their hearts to their last days the memory of the great gathering to which they had been invited.

Assessing Personal Impressions

Since returning, I have been asked repeatedly about my own impressions. I shall try to detail them.

1. *The bringing together of men from great cosmopolitan centers to meet evangelists from the jungles and thickets of the world was an incredible undertaking.* The logistics of such a meeting stagger the imagination. Just housing them all was a stupendous task. Some of the delegates had never before seen a large multi-storied hotel. Yet the whole procedure was virtually without a flaw. Not a little credit accrued to the well-trained pages and stewards enrolled from every country of the world.

2. *I was impressed and amazed that men of all races could share together, eat together, and talk together without reservation, jealousy, or prejudice. It was a common sight to see an Anglican prelate talking with two or three eager men from a faraway field in India, apparently enjoying the experience. I had breakfast each morning with a man from Toronto and another from Pugwash, Nova Scotia. The latter worked with four small congregations, each of whose Sunday morning attendance was from twenty-five to thirty persons. As he described his problems and the idiosyncrasies of the members, I could easily identify with them. I forgot to ask him about his sectarian affiliation until I saw him wearing a clerical collar at breakfast the last day, whereas he had worn an aged gray suit the rest of the time.*

3. *Most of you who read this journal know that I believe we are standing in the doorway of history and that another reformation is due. It will recapture and stress Jesus as the center of all that is spiritual. It is the forfeiture of this reality that has condemned every reformatory movement, including our own, to eventual disintegration. The new reformation will do what the old did not — become alive and vibrant in the Near and Far East. The proteges of the first were content to “take Jesus to China and India.” They forgot that He was already there before they arrived. But, in the developing industrial revolution which made England and the United States prosper, Jesus was another export commodity; and those who took Him in their suitcases also packed along their divisions to foist upon a people unable to cope with them.*

The times have changed. No longer can slick Jesus-peddlers wrap villages around their fingers by dispensing rice instead of God’s grace. People are more than statistics in a sectarian missions column. The Spirit is moving to reveal the great root error of the whole Christian historical concept. Those who move in harmony will survive. Others will disappear beneath the grinding wheels of the Juggernaut of increasing knowledge. “They must upward then, and onward, who would

keep abreast of truth.” As I sat in the various sessions guided by those who were valiantly seeking to deal with the frightening problems which beset our world, I had the distinct feeling that we were being called to a greater and nobler task than any of us have pursued.

Now I am convinced that most of those who came and saw have also conquered. Never again will their views be as constricted and restricted as before. They have gained not only a greater knowledge, but they have seen freedom beckoning them from afar. And for that matter, so have I. Thank God!

INDEX OF ESSAYS

The Christian Standard

by W. Carl Ketcherside

Journals

The following essays by Carl Ketcherside appeared originally in the *The Christian Standard*, published by the Standard Publishing Company, from 1974 through 1983.

From his youth, Ketcherside made it a practice to read one or more books per day. The series titled “The Tool Chest,” published in the *Standard*, contains informative, but unconventional reviews of books which Ketcherside read and recommended, in addition to comments of an enlightening and uplifting nature.

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The Tool Chest (1)

Christian Standard (November 3, 1974): 26

Christian Standard

On April 23, 1941, Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke to the American Booksellers Association. It was the anniversary of the Nazi book-burning. The president said, "In this war we know books are weapons. And it is part of your dedication to make them weapons for man's freedom." I agree that books are weapons, but with the gracious consent of the editor, I am going to write a series of little notes about books you can use as tools in constructing a better life. The articles will appear as space is available and should not be allowed to crowd out more important material.

A man can get by with a very few tools. He can construct a fairly good doghouse with nothing more than a hammer, saw and square. But life is not a doghouse, although we live in such a way as to be in one a lot of the time. What I hope to do is to suggest volumes which will enlighten, inspire and encourage you. Unless we stimulate our brethren to become students in this age intellectual breakthrough, we have had it. God has not promised to keep enough people ignorant so the church can survive among us.

Of course, I realize that books are expensive. But they are not nearly so costly as ignorance. It costs much more not to read and study than it does to keep informed. What one does not know can hurt him! It is true that some will not be helped by

reading, or for that matter, by much of anything else. Christoph Lichtenberg who died in 1799 wrote, “A book is a mirror; if an ass peers into it, you cannot expect an apostle to look out.”

I am also well aware that books are like clothing. What suits me may not fit you. But since I try to read at least a hundred contemporary books each year, in addition to a few weightier tomes from the past, I shall try to cover a variety of them. I shall strive to serve up a tossed salad rather than a constant diet of sliced literary tomatoes. You can furnish your own salad dressing, which may make my articles a little bit more palatable.

The Tool Chest (2)

Christian Standard (December 15, 1974): 11

Christian Standard

Benjamin Disraeli wrote in *Contarini Fleming* in 1344: “Read no history: nothing but biography, for that is life without theory.” That seems a little extreme but I have always been hooked on biography. After I visited Monticello and Harper’s Ferry, I came straight home and read two large volumes on the life of Thomas Jefferson and two on the life of John Brown. I was intrigued to learn of the connection of the latter with Alexander Campbell,

It is a real blessing that *The Fool of God*, by the late Louis Cochran, is again in print, the first in the *New Life* series by Standard Publishing. When I first came into possession of this volume I started to read it and could not lay it down. It was about two o’clock in the morning when Nell called sleepily from the bedroom to ask if I was ever coming to bed, I was then at page 365 of the book and I replied, “I can’t come now. I’ve got Alexander Campbell in jail in Scotland and I cannot go to sleep and leave him there.”

I know one young preacher who would read a chapter and become so charged up and motivated he would put the book down and start out to go calling to try and convert his whole sector of the world to the restoration plea. By the time he got his car started he was wondering what Campbell did in the next chapter, so he would turn the key off and run in and read

another chapter. If you have not read this book you ought not to put off doing so. If someone does a real deed of kindness for you and you want to send them a gift of appreciation, I would suggest *The Fool of God*. Do not forget that books are gifts that can be opened more than once.

The book, which contains 410 pages reveals Campbell as a proud and somewhat egotistical man whose practical wife knew how to help him keep his feet on the ground, without stifling his ambition. There tender spots which will grip you, such as the reunion of the rest of the family with Tomas Campbell on the American frontier (page 69), and the baptism of the Campbells in Buffalo Creek one Wednesday afternoon (page 164). But you must read it for yourself and I hope you will not postpone doing so.

The Tool Chest (3)

Christian Standard (January 5, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

Against the Tide is the story of Watchman Nee. It is written by Angus I. Kinnear, who came to know Nee in 1938 in Great Britain, when Kinnear was preparing to sail to India as a missionary. The book is made more valuable by a family tree of the Nees, a map of China showing its many provinces and districts, a list of Christian workers and leaders in mainland China, and several pages of excellent photographs. On the page opposite the title are words by Watchman Nee himself: "I want nothing for myself; I want everything for the Lord."

The book is a magnificent tribute to men who underwent all kinds of persecution as the Communists took control, yet never surrendered their faith. It is the story of a restoration attempt designated "The Little Flock Movement" and it is a moving and dramatic piece of writing. This book should be in every church library and it should be read. It made me feel a sense of shame for the feebleness of my own efforts in an affluent society. Watchman Nee died in a Communist prison June 1, 1972, at the age of sixty-nine. The book is produced by Christian Literature Crusade, at \$4.95.

To the Golden Shore recounts the life of Adoniram Judson, first American missionary to the Far East, who left Salem in 1812 for Burma. Judson suffered from bitter and open hostility, overt persecution and imprisonment. Refusing to be daunted by

the death of his loved ones and by his own illness, he stayed on, being forced to wait more than ten years before he made his first convert. He translated the Bible into Burmese and produced the first English-Burmese dictionary. He died on April 12, 1850, and was buried at sea.

The book, a 530-page volume, was written by Courtney Anderson, a producer of documentary films. It is well-researched and authentic and is now produced in a paperback edition for \$2.45 by Zondervan Publishing House.

The Tool Chest (4)

Christian Standard (January 12, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

John W. Wenham was vice-principal of Tyndale Hall in Bristol, England, until he was appointed warden of Latimer House, at Oxford. He is the author of two books recently published, which will be followed by two more, all of them dealing with the nature of Scripture, and a defense of revelation against the attacks of modern and destructive criticism. The thesis of the books is that Christ's view of Scripture can and should still be the Christian view. The volumes are not for casual readers or shallow reasoners, but men and women of depth and perception will read them with profound appreciation. Both are published in this country by Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill.

Christ and the Bible consists of 206 pages. It postulates the idea that belief in the Bible comes from faith in Christ and not vice versa. Here is a quotation from the promotional statement.

The argument is as follows: if the Gospels are substantially true, we are justified in regarding as historical those features in them which are often repeated and which are found in a variety of Gospel strata. Three such features are Jesus' attitude to the Old Testament, His attitude to His own teaching and His attitude to the continuing witness of His disciples after His death.

It is in dealing with objections to the claims of Jesus that the author reaches his peak. The chapters on the extent of the canon and the reliability of the text are great reading.

The Goodness of God is a 225-page volume dealing with the problem of a good God in a world of cruelty, suffering, deformed babies, war, and famine. It does not shy away from difficult things in the Old Testament Scriptures but faces head-on to matters which some would like to forget. It will make you think, and that will probably not hurt any of us!

The Tool Chest (5)

Christian Standard (January 19, 1975): 14

Christian Standard

Occasionally, a brother in the Lord produces a literary work of such awesome proportions that it outshines my feeble attempts like a new Cadillac parked beside a 1965 vintage Volkswagen. That doesn't "bug" me, if you'll pardon the pun. I'll just park my efforts and ride with him in the Cadillac.

I am indebted right now to Donald A. Nash, professor of Greek and New Testament at Kentucky Christian College, for his *Practical Parallel Concordance*. He has taken almost every word in the Greek New Testament and shown how it is translated in the *Authorized Version*, the *American Standard*, the *Revised Standard*, and Moffatt's translation. With this large 575-page volume one can tell at a glance at parallel columns how an original term has been rendered in all of these translations of Scripture.

A good example is *anupokritos* in Romans 12:9. The *Authorized Version* has "without dissimulation." That probably does not mean much to most readers in our generation. But the *American Standard* has "without hypocrisy," the *Revised Standard* has "genuine," and Moffatt "the real thing." We ought not to have too much trouble with "Let love be the real thing."

The Greek words appear in alphabetical order, each with a basic translation supplied by the author, based on his lexical

studies. Students who have been in classes taught by Brother Nash will testify to his scholarship and ability, and those who have read his articles know that he is an excellent writer.

I marvel at the effort which went into this volume. It is dedicated to his wife and three sons, with the notation that their patience and love during the long hours spent on his research made this book possible. I am sure he was not hard to find when they wanted him. All they had to do was pound on the door of his study. The book was photolithographed and bears the imprint of Witness Press, Grayson, Ky.

The Tool Chest (6)

Christian Standard (January 26, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

MY father-in-law, who had very little formal education, was an excellent natural administrator. He was an efficient elder of the congregation where he attended, and was several times elected mayor of his city. Once when we were talking about teaching the Word, he told me he had worn out three sets of *Peoples' New Testament With Notes*, by B. W. Johnson. That book is still in print after almost a century, but some of the material is dated.

Now a new work has been brought out in two volumes by College Press which follows the same format but is more adapted to today's students. It is called *Bible Study New Testament*. The author is Rhoderick D. Ice, a graduate of Kentucky Christian College who lives in Lynchburg, Va. Two versions are employed in the text. They are *Good News for Modern Man* and *The New International Version*. These appear in parallel columns on the page, so one has both renderings immediately before him.

At the bottom of the page appear notes, explanations, and applicable references. The expositions are given in plain language, and are easily understandable by the average reader. The books would be especially helpful to new converts with little basic knowledge of the Scriptures, and to those who have meager schooling, yet have an eagerness to know God's will.

Included in Volume 1 are several charts and indexes. These include a harmony of the Gospel records, catalogs of the miracles and parables of Jesus, and a list of His discourses and conversations. Tables of time, weights and measures are also supplied. I suspect the best thing about the books is the fortunate selection of the two versions. One is a free translation which emphasizes the modern idiom, the other is an attempt at accuracy from the original. Those who want to teach the Word with modern versions will appreciate the work which went into these books.

The Tool Chest (7)

Christian Standard (February 23, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

In my library is a volume of 430 pages containing a series of lectures delivered at the University of New York City, in 1831. The title is *The Evidences of Christianity*. I have read it through twice and read excerpts from it many times. I doubt that you could hand it to the average college student in the “now generation” with any hope that he would wade through it. Fortunately, there are books available much more suited to our mobile and accelerated age.

Set Forth Your Case— An Examination of Christianity’s Credentials, is one of them. Published by Moody Press at \$1.95, this 144-page paperback is an arsenal of ammunition. *Christianity Today* said of it,

His bareknuckles challenge of current leading theological ideas will be cheered by people who possess but cannot adequately articulate a disdain for the irrational aberrations sweeping through the ecclesiastical intelligentsia.

That is a sophisticated way of saying that the author clobbers some wild thinking that you are afraid to get close to. The book is as welcome as your big brother coming into sight when you are being cornered by the bully of the town.

Know Why You Believe, by Paul E. Little, is another good

one for the young mind churning around because of some of the skeptical fare served up in the intellectual chow-line of some universities. It deals with questions like these: Is Christianity rational? Is there a God? Did Christ rise from the dead? Are the Bible documents reliable? Are miracles possible?, etc.

I do not buy the idea that we have to scrap all of our apologetic approaches just because we live in “the space age,” and I am pleased that these books blend the old and the new into effective weaponry to use against the current infidelity and humanism which penetrate our culture.

The Tool Chest (8)

Christian Standard (March 2, 1975): 6

Christian Standard

I trust you'll not be turned off if I take time to talk about my latest book, which is about the Holy Spirit and is called *Heaven Help Us*. It was published by Standard and sells for \$2.95. If you secure a copy I do hope you'll read the preface. It was inserted, not for filler material, but to tell you what I hoped to accomplish in the volume.

The book, although not formally divided, actually covers three areas. It is intended to establish the personality of the Spirit and His relation to the Word of God in its three manifestations— living, oral, and written. I take the position that the written Word is an instrument of the Spirit; and while the Spirit is responsible for the Word, He did not write himself out of existence nor embalm himself in that Word.

There is a special chapter dealing at some length with blasphemy against the Spirit, the sin which Jesus declared would not be forgiven. I make a distinction between unforgiven sins and an unforgivable sin. In this connection there is a reference to apostasy and the sin unto death, neither of which I regard as the sin against the Holy Spirit. It could be that this is the most interesting chapter of all.

In the final section I deal with some of the things which the Spirit does for the saint in our day. I hold that the Spirit is God's

birthday gift to all of His children. The Spirit acts as the other helper. I grew up in a segment of the restoration movement which implied the Spirit was bound in sheepskin and stamped in gold leaf. It is a thrill now to know that God did not throw the Book at me but sent the Spirit to move into my decaying tenement. Some of the material in my new book appeared in the volume called *One Great Chapter*. It will now be available to a greater number of readers and I hope you will be one of them.

The Tool Chest (9)

Christian Standard (March 23, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

Since this is appearing in CHRISTIAN STANDARD I would like to refer to a couple of paperbacks by Standard Publishing which meet a real need.

Religions of the World, by Thompson Burks, is a study course for adults and it is a good one. In our shrinking universe we need to be aware of what and how other people worship since the worshiper always becomes like the object of his devotion. This book covers Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Oriental religions, and primitive religions, as well as Christianity. It is designed for a serious and mature approach and is not intended for a casual off-handed perusal. There are questions at the close of each chapter. A working bibliography is appended. I am eager to see an upgrading of our approach to life in the twentieth century and it seems to me that a course like this could spark a more vital concern. Too often we withdraw from the big world into which God sent us, and create our own little worlds in which we mill around and argue with one another.

Holes in the Church Carpet contains thirty short talks by Robert W. Allen, a school teacher and administrator who has also served in several congregations as an elder and preacher. Many of the titles of these brief dissertations are clever and will encourage you to employ the material to help others serve Christ more fully. Some of the subjects are "Where Were You Last

Tuesday?"; "Homogenized Men"; "A Little While After the Fourth"; and "The Boots Were Too Small."

The illustrations are timely and down-to-earth. The subject matter is drawn from everyday life and can be digested by the humblest of men. After all, Jesus did not say, "Feed my giraffes." He did say, "Feed my sheep." Brother Allen has the rare knack of throwing the fodder down where the sheep can reach it without climbing an extension ladder. Soaring above the heads of the saints is for the birds!

The Tool Chest (10)

Christian Standard (March 30, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

If a horse stumbles and breaks a leg, it is usually shot. If a child has earache in the night the parents will give it aspirin. If a boy is being bullied by two others, the schoolmaster will intervene to prevent injustice. Whenever there is suffering, whether physical pain or mental anguish, man-at-his-best will do his best to help. But his powers are so limited. God's power, so they say, is unlimited. So why doesn't He *do* something?

This is an exact quotation which begins a chapter in one of the most informative little books that I have read this past year. It is *Arguing With God*, by Hugh Silvester, and is published by Inter-Varsity Press at \$1.50. The author begins with the postulate made to interested unbelievers, "If you become a Christian then you will have on your plate a first-class philosophical problem." He then proceeds with a Christian examination of the problem of evil as fairly and justly as I have ever seen it done. He asserts, "Our minds must control our emotions, not vice versa. And, for the Christian, the mind must be informed by what God has said, not by wishful thinking or by sentimental optimism."

I have a real feeling that we must become an informed people. We cannot meet the needs of this ripped-off world with a "comic book mentality." Life is not a joke. Our minds can be starved while we stuff our bodies. If we put half as much

thinking into our minds as we cram food into our stomachs we would grow in grace, and in knowledge of the truth. Books like *Arguing With God* should be read, underlined, questioned and digested. We should set goals for our reading, and we should stay with them. Those goals should deal with the quality as well as the quantity of what is read.

Sydney Smith wrote, “We should accustom the mind to keep the best company by introducing it only to the best books.” Look around your room and see what kind of literary companions you have chosen for your association.

The Tool Chest (11)

Christian Standard (April 6, 1975): 12

Christian Standard

James DeForest Murch was my brother by the grace of God and my friend by his own graciousness. I think I read every book he wrote, and that took some reading! When he visited our home we always talked at length about his writings, because that is the way he wrote— at length. Like an elephant, he seemed never to forget anything, and he had a compendium of names, places, dates, and happenings stored away in his capacious mind. He could dip down into this mental cache of statistics and talk by the hour about them if you didn't go to sleep on him.

He was the right man to write a history of the restoration movement and I am glad he produced *Christians Only*. I get a bang out of the fact that he used the labels, “rightists,” “centrists,” and “leftists,” to categorize the three main branches of the fragmented attempt to “unite the Christians in all the sects.” Everyone who writes a history of a religious movement always does this, of course, and he always thinks of the group with which he identifies as central. Dissenters are like the cannons in “The Charge of the Light Brigade,” to the right and left. In Brother Murch's plan the Disciples of Christ were the leftists, while those of us in the noninstrument Churches of Christ were rightists. He did not think we were in the right, but merely *on* the right. I used to rib him about that!

But the book contains valuable information for all of us,

and it was written with a great deal of fairness and objectivity. We are faced with the distressing fact that thousands of our brethren no longer know about our historical roots, and it is axiomatic that those who are ignorant of history are doomed to repeat its mistakes. I eagerly suggest that all of you read *Christians Only*. [Standard Publishing: \$6.95 clothbound; \$3.50 paperback]. It will thrill your soul, stimulate your mind, and give you a sense of belonging to a tremendous effort to recapture the power and purpose which drove the primitive saints forward.

The Tool Chest (13)

Christian Standard (May 18, 1975): 6

Christian Standard

Pillars of Faith is a book to provide “Biblical certainty in an uncertain world.” It was compiled and edited by two members of the faculty at Pepperdine University— Herman O. Wilson, Professor of English, and Morris M. Womack, Professor of Speech. Both of these brethren have a very deep commitment to the revelation of God. There are a number of chapters written by men who teach in the various colleges maintained by members of the Churches of Christ.

The 280-page volume deals with four major questions: Does the Bible have a message for modern man?; Is the Bible scientifically reliable?; Can faith survive an age of doubt?; and Can the Bible influence man’s conduct? The foreword was written by William S. Banowsky, president of Pepperdine. The book was produced by Baker Book House and the paperback edition costs \$4.95.

I think you will like the chapter on “The Authenticity of the Scriptures,” by the late J. W. Roberts, of Abilene Christian College. “The Word of Prophecy Made Sure,” by Jack P. Lewis, who is on the faculty at Harding College Graduate School of Religion in Memphis, will also strengthen your faith. I wish that every university student could be exposed to the teaching contained in this timely volume.

In one of his messages, Herman O. Wilson says of the Bible, “Here is truth to make men free, counsel to make them wise, teachings to make them kind and compassionate, and promises to give men courage when life is difficult and the days are dark.” If you know of someone who has real doubt as to the relevance of the Biblical message for our day, I suggest you share this book with him. Volumes like this should be kept in circulation.

Perhaps a congregation should publish a brief statement about a book in each weekly bulletin and urge the saints to read it. A lot of people will read the right kind of material if someone suggests it to them.

The Tool Chest (14)

Christian Standard (June 1, 1975): 13

Christian Standard

I am sure you have been expecting me to stop writing about books and start exhorting, so in this little article I shall try to live up to your expectations and justify your fears. I think a lot of my brothers and sisters are gorging food and starving intellectually. They end up with well-padded exteriors and shriveled spirits. Perhaps they were “soured” on books by having to make reports on them in English Literature classes in high school, and have resolved never to read again.

I knew of a man whose wife was such a poor cook he decided to give up and quit eating altogether. Unfortunately, he did not live long enough to know if his experiment would work. A lot of folk are dying spiritually from malnutrition. I was riding with a brother in Georgia once, and I decided to turn the conversation to books. He moved his chewing tobacco around to one side of his mouth with his tongue, so he could speak, and said, “I don’t read nothin’ no more.” He confirmed my suspicions.

Reading is primarily a matter of discipline. I think we ought to include books in our budget as we do groceries. If you did not quit eating when you got your high school diploma, you should not have quit reading either. Norman Vincent Peal has “Eight Rules for Keeping Vital.” Number Six is, “Seek Inspiration: in books, friends, music, art, travel.” I urge you to

read every day. Start with *Basic Introduction to the New Testament*, by John R. W. Stott. It will turn you on and whet your appetite. Even if you consider yourself well-informed in the New Covenant Scriptures, you will probably come up with some new ideas which you can pass along to others. Read! It certainly beats fixing flats or mowing lawns!

The Tool Chest (12)

Christian Standard (May 4, 1975): 12

Christian Standard

“Read me a story, Daddy.” Every father learns that, at a certain age, his children want to thrust a favorite book into his hands while they climb up into his lap, nestle a head against his chest, and get peanut butter and jelly all over his shirt front, while they settle back in happy anticipation that their request will be acknowledged. Blessed indeed is the parent who does not thrust his little ones from him, even though he is tired from his day in the shop or office and had intended to settle down and read the newspaper without distraction.

What one reads to his little ones upon such occasions may have a lot to do in cultivating their future reading habits and in the formation of their character. There are a lot of excellent books available in our day, alive with colorful illustrations and specially adapted to certain ages. But I want to recommend one that has been in our family for three generations. Before I ever started to school in a little one-room village schoolhouse, I had learned to read in *First Steps*, by Charles Foster. I lay flat on my stomach on the old rag carpet which was the only rug we had, and went through the book time after time. It never grew old. Nell and I read it to Jerry and Sue when they were three to six years of age, and later purchased it for the grandchildren who are now scattered to various universities.

I would like to see a couple in each congregation purchase

a supply of these inexpensive little books and give one to each child to keep and treasure. Grandparents should include one in their Christmas gifts to little tots who have wrapped themselves around their hearts. The simple stories about Jesus have questions at the end of each chapter to ask the children. I am glad that Moody Press keeps *First Steps* alive in an attractive paperback edition which you can purchase for only \$1.25, and I pay tribute to Charles Foster, long since deceased, for writing this volume.

The Tool Chest (15)

Christian Standard (June 15, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

Just about everyone in the United States has heard of W. A. Criswell, who serves the large First Baptist Church in Dallas, Tex. For more than fifty years that church has sponsored noonday pre-Easter services in a downtown theater which seats 2,400 people. The place is always jam-packed. A few years ago the messages of Dr. Criswell were gathered and compiled in a book called *In Defense of the Faith*. In spite of the fact that the eminent speaker occasionally allows his “Baptist theology” to hang out, the book has some excellent material. Some of the illustrations are apt and usable.

Another book by Dr. Criswell is called *The Bible for Today's World*. It contains ten sermons with a rich apologetic content. Like myself, the speaker does not think that the world needs a new Bible to entice the spiritual dropouts back into the fold. It certainly does need to study the one the Lord gave and overcome the spiritual illiteracy so prevalent. Dr. Criswell says, “The infallible Word of God is our hope for salvation both in this world and the world that is to come,” and one has no trouble understanding what he says about God’s revelation. I found the talk on “The War Over the Word” very interesting. The one on “Jesus and His Bible” was no less so. It is sort of refreshing to read after someone who believes that God has spoken and we have His message before us.

Since I have a very firm conviction that the sacred Scriptures are God's Word, I am pleased when I find someone who has the courage to speak up for the Book, especially in a crowded theater building in the heart of a "swinging" urban center. Zondervan Publishing House deserves credit for bringing out these interesting, informative, and inexpensive paperbacks which I read on a round trip by plane to and from California. I agree with W. A. Criswell in his statement, "God is in this Holy Book, and all we know of God and true religion is revealed in the pages of the Bible."

The Tool Chest (16)

Christian Standard (June 29, 1975): 15

Christian Standard

Sholem Asch is credited with saying “writing comes more easily if you have something to say.” I know a man who has something to say and says it in a way matched by few others after whom I have read. J. N. D. Anderson is Professor of Oriental Laws and Director of Advanced Legal Studies in the University of London. He is, in my opinion, one of the most perceptive thinkers and reasoners in our day. This is evidenced in his book, *Christianity and Comparative Religion*, in which he defends the uniqueness of the revelation given to and through the apostles, while dealing with non-Christian views in absolute fairness and justice. It is not a book for casual reading, but it is invaluable for the university student who must deal with syncretism, humanism, mysticism, and esoteric philosophy.

However, the book by Anderson which I would especially like to recommend to those who must face up to modern revolutionary thought is *Morality, Law, and Grace*. It began with the delivery of the Forwood Lectures on Philosophy and History of Religion in the University of Liverpool. The lectures were expanded into a book which seems to me one of the most lucid discussions of the conflict between law and order and permissive freedom. Anderson has been a lecturer in Islamic law for many years and contrasts morality and law in Muslim and Hindu thinking with that of the Christian revelation.

Both of these books are published in our country by Inter Varsity Press at \$1.95 each and make a genuine contribution to the current dialogue about private and public morality. Those who have their minds made up that they know everything may be a little shaken as they read, but that will be good. The concluding sentence holds that Jesus “calls His disciples to the highest standard of ethical living— and makes available to them a supernatural grace which, alone, can enable them to respond.”

The Tool Chest (17)

Christian Standard (August 3, 1975, p. 10)

Christian Standard

There is a Yiddish proverb which says, “Words should be weighed and not counted.” A few years ago, I imported from Great Britain two books which came to mean a great deal to me. One was titled *A New Testament Wordbook*, the other *More New Testament Words*. They were the work of William Barclay. I was astounded at the amount of information which I gleaned from the study of seventy key words from the Greek New Testament. I used some of the material to help make my otherwise drab talks sparkle, and much more in expository teaching. The revelation of Heaven became more meaningful as Dr. Barclay explored what each word meant to the writers of the New Covenant Scriptures and to those who received the apostolic letters.

Both of the original books have now been compiled in a single volume of three hundred pages by Westminster Press. This new edition is uniform in size and binding with the seventeen-volume *Daily Study Bible Series* by the same author. To help the student, the new wordbook is keyed to the usage of the terms in the larger set. The meaning of each word is traced through classical Greek, the Septuagint Version, Hellenistic Greek, and the papyri. Evidently Dr. Barclay did not indulge too much time in the great Scots sport of golfing!

He uses descriptive designations for terms which would make good subjects for pulpit presentations. Examples are as

follows: *Sophia*– the Mind Equipped; *Hupogrammos*– The Perfect Pattern; *Phobos*– The Right and Wrong Fear; *Parousia*– The Arrival of the King; etc. You do not need to know Greek to use this informative volume. It is especially prepared for the English reader. If you secure this handy little volume, be sure to read the preface. It is as enlightening as it is brief, and you will learn from it before you ever start in on the body of the work. Best of all you will know what weighty things words really are when used by the Spirit.

The Tool Chest (18)

Christian Standard (August 17, 1975): 12

Christian Standard

LIFE is such a thrilling adventure to me that nothing seems boring or merely commonplace. It isn't that I ever do anything particularly great, but I have developed a consciousness of God in my life until I am contented and free from undue concern. Even little things seem meaningful when you do them in unison with those whom you love, and sharing life with its very Author puts everything in a proper perspective. During the French student revolt in May, 1968, someone wrote on a wall, "A little thing can be everything; but one must be able to see it, and sometimes to be content with it."

That's why I was eager to read *The Adventure of Living*, by Paul Tournier, the noted physician and psychiatrist who lives in Geneva and writes with such spiritual impact. I have already read *Guilt and Grace* and *The Meaning of Persons*. I tucked this one I had not perused into my suitcase and read it on an American Airlines jet, finishing it between planes in the sprawling Fort Worth-Dallas Terminal. I underlined sentences which gripped my attention and to which I must return often for mental refreshment. The eminent doctor says some important things.

The book is divided into three parts— The Adventure, The Risk, and The Choice. Some chapters are outstanding. Among these are the ones entitled: "The Adventure of God,"

“Surrender,” “Heaven and Earth,” and “Meditation.” Dr. Tournier says, “There are people who go on indefinitely preparing for life instead of living it.” He also says, “It is always the faith of unbelievers that interests me most. That of the believers is well known.” I like that sly little phrase, “the faith of unbelievers.” The dust-jacket begins, “For the dissatisfied, for those who become increasingly aware through the years of something missing in their lives, this book will open wide the gates of self-discovery.” I agree with that, and what a discovery it is!

The Tool Chest (19)

Christian Standard (August 24, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

The history of Herbert W. Armstrong as related to the beginning of the cult is thorough, but probably more interesting for present readers is the inclusion of an interview with the son, Garner Ted Armstrong, which is quite revealing. It is apparent that Garner Ted does not agree with his father upon some of the theological points which have been emphasized in the past. There is a good deal of testimony as to why the dapper radio and television spokesman was jerked from the air on “The World Tomorrow” program.

I regard the appendices to the book as very vital to an understanding of the Worldwide Church of God. These deal with doctrinal points, and provide a comparison with other cults. There is a map showing the concentrations of units, together with figures of membership.

Another important book is *The Plain Truth About Armstrongism*, by Roger R. Chambers, who received his Master’s degree at the Cincinnati Bible Seminary. He does a good job of zeroing in on the Anglo-Israelite theory which Herbert W. Armstrong dubs “the lost key” to Biblical interpretation.

I think Brother Chambers needs commendation for his analysis of the fanciful British-Israel dream and his very capable exposure of its fallacies. His book is published by Baker Book

House and has been brought out as one of the “Direction Books.” It is a well-written and readable presentation which will provide you with an arsenal of ammunition against error.

The Tool Chest (20)

Christian Standard (September 7, 1975): 11

Christian Standard

On a hot Sunday afternoon I was sitting with a group of brethren in the shade of some trees which formed part of the landscaping arrangement for a lovely little rural meetinghouse. We were scheduled for an all-day meeting, and having finished a genuine country-style basket dinner, we were awaiting the afternoon service. Someone posed the age-old question, “If you were to be cast away on a desert island and could take with you one book besides the Bible, which one would you choose?” I was surprised, but delighted to hear a couple of the men say they would opt for *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, by W. E. Vine.

It would be a good selection. The present volume contains 1,400 pages, and is actually four volumes in one. It was prepared for non-technical students with little or no knowledge of the Greek language. Almost every word in the new covenant Scriptures is covered. You find the English term as in a dictionary, and listed under it are the various Greek words translated by that term. The Greek original is spelled in English letters, with the Greek spelling in parenthetical form. There follows a definition of the word, as well as illustrations of its application in various passages.

The book also contains historical and geographical background material when the meaning of a word is clarified by

such an allusion. It is especially good in making distinctions between Greek words with a similar but not exact connotation. As one studies the book he becomes aware of the reason why it occupied the entire life of the author. He lived in Great Britain, and gave himself unstintingly to the task of preparing a literary tool which • would convey the meaning of the Bible to every honest student. The book is published in this country by Fleming H. Revell Company, and sells for \$13.95. It is worth every cent. I would not be without it.

The Tool Chest (21)

Christian Standard (October 5, 1975): 10

Christian Standard

I am writing this immediately after concluding a 466-page volume bearing the fascinating title *Organizing to Beat the Devil*. It is the story of the Methodists and the making of America. I wish everyone of you could read it. It served to help me see some of the developments on the American frontier as I never before saw them, but it also impressed me with the inevitability of the division over human slavery when given the divergent traditions and structures of the opposing sides.

The author is Charles W. Ferguson, former editor in book publishing and a senior editor of *The Reader's Digest*, and one-time cultural relations officer in the United States Embassy in London. His writing style is sparkling, entertaining, and interesting, and one who reads this well-documented volume is going to find his knowledge of our history as a nation greatly enhanced.

The book is one of the "Religion in America Series," which also contains *The Indomitable Baptists*, by O. K. Armstrong and Marjorie Moore Armstrong; and *Captives of the Word* by the late Louis Cochran and Bess White Cochran. The latter book is called "a narrative history of the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), the Christian churches (Independent), and the Churches of Christ." The series was produced by Doubleday and Company and the books add a great deal to the

understanding of “the influence religious convictions have had on American history at large” to quote from the dust jacket of the Cochran volume.

The Cochrans begin their prologue with the statement, “This is the story of the stoutest Protestant reformation since the time of Martin Luther,” and they begin their final statement with the words, “Today the unity of all Christians continues to be the goal of all segments.” What lies between those two statements makes excellent reading. When you lay the book down you will have a sense of destiny. Hopefully, you’ll help launch a twentieth century restoration movement and make a little history yourself!

The Tool Chest (22)

Christian Standard (October 12, 1975): 10

Christian Standard

A new series of books to be called “The Voice of the Old Testament” is in the making. The writing will be done chiefly by British authors, famous for their expository ability. If the remainder of the volumes maintain the high standard of the first, we are in for some real scholar-ship which will open up great new vistas of understanding.

The initial book is called *The Day of the Lion*, and is an explanation of “the ever relevant— but never popular— message of the prophet Amos.” The author is J. A. Motyer, principal of Trinity College, Bristol, England, of whom Michael Green says,

Alec Motyer has clearly got the spirit of Amos in his blood. He loves the prophet from Tekoa, and takes endless pains to give full weight to every syllable of the prophecy. He is, of course, a distinguished scholar, and we are given full value on that front; but you will find here none of the academic deadness which all too often comes through in a commentary work.

This statement aptly describes the author’s work.

Motyer really ties the time of Amos in with the present. He writes, “Standards had gone to pot. Authority and the rule of law were despised, and national leadership, while revelling in the

publicity and dignity of position . . . seemed to be contributing to the complete breakdown of law and order.” He is sharp and incisive, as when referring to what he calls “Gilgal religion.” I learned a great deal about the meaning of the word “Gilgal” and it gave new impetus to what the prophet had to say in rebuke and reprimand.

I thought I was a fair student of Amos, having taught on this prophecy many times, but I learned so much from the first reading of this book that I intend to read it again a little more diligently and do some marking in my Bible as I study it. *The Day of the Lion* is published in this country by InterVarsity Press at \$3.95 per copy. If you read it be sure to give special attention to the chapter entitled “The Autumn of Opportunity.”

The Tool Chest (23)

Christian Standard (November 16, 1975): 8

Christian Standard

Because I am a firm believer in the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred scriptures I am always pleased when men of recognized stature in the scholarly world, write out of conviction that God has spoken and that His revelation is available to us in the apostolic writings. That is why, about twelve years ago, I was glad to learn of “The Evangelical Fellowship of the Anglican Communion.”

While I was preaching in Great Britain it seemed to me that “the Anglican Communion” was about to be washed down the drain and into the Thames River. A great many of the clergy professed little faith in anything and lived up to their profession. Great cathedrals were like empty barns except for a few elderly ladies who congregated for vespers or evensong. It appeared that the state church was doomed to be sacked along with the colonial policy with which it was once identified. But I was mistaken.

The “evangelical fellowship” was formed by men who believed that the words of the Spirit could bring life to a corpse when injected into it. Under the leadership of Philip Edgecombe Hughes they began to produce a series of paperback books “designed to reaffirm the doctrine of the New Testament in the light of past history, the present needs, and the future development of the Church.” The series was called “Christian

Foundations” and of the authors it was said, “They are convinced that, as evangelicals, they have a full and essential contribution to make, especially in advocating the recovery of the dynamic witness, the apostolic teaching, the fellowship in worship, and the victorious living of the New Testament.”

The series is produced in this country by Westminster Press, and contains such titles as *God Speaks to Man*, by J. I. Packer; *But for the Grace of God*, by Philip E. Hughes; and *After Death*, by J. A. Motyer. These are some of the great expositors of our day and I owe them a real debt.

The Tool Chest (24)

Christian Standard (December 21, 1975): 14

Christian Standard

Many of you are aware of *The Living Word Commentary*, a neatly done set of books, by R. B. Sweet Company, of Austin, Tex. The latest addition is *The Revelation to John*, by the late J. W. Roberts, professor in Abilene Christian College, whose untimely death occurred while he was working on the commentary. The manuscript for the last six chapters of Revelation had been finished, but the remainder was in the form of a rough draft which was completed from mimeographed materials handed out to his classes and from tape-recorded lectures delivered to them.

The book, which contains in excess of two hundred pages, is free from sensationalism and wild speculation. This is especially evident when the author deals with such things as “the mark of the beast.” Dr. Roberts was a conservative scholar, but was eminently fair in allowing opposing views to be stated. The book is commendatory from one standpoint, the fact that one does not need to wade through long paragraphs to determine what the author thought was conveyed by a statement. The average commentary on a book of prophecy often needs a commentary on the commentary.

Those inclined toward premillennialism and dispensationalism will not be happy with the explanation of chapter twenty, where the author says that the physical return

of Christ to reign in Jerusalem is not even mentioned in the text. He regards “the first resurrection” as the resurrection of the cause for which martyrs had been put to death, and denies that it is “an earthly bodily resurrection to an earthly millennial reign in Jerusalem with a reincarnated Jesus.”

This latest addition to the set is listed at \$4.25, which is not at all expensive for a first printing at today’s inflated prices. The set of commentaries will make a helpful and attractive addition to any library, but should especially be included in church libraries for use by students.

The Tool Chest (25)

Christian Standard (December 28, 1975): 6

Christian Standard

I have always been troubled by the fact that so many of our brethren seem to have such little knowledge of the leaders of what has been called “the radical reformation,” that is, the Anabaptist movement. Most of us have some concept of the work of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and their associates, but know little indeed about Conrad Grebel, George Blaurock, Hans Denck, and other “stepchildren of the Reformation” whose opposition to infant baptism brought persecution, and even death at the hands of the Reformation leaders.

You can fill in the void in your historical perspective by reading the revised edition of *The Anabaptist Story* by William R. Estep, Professor of Church History at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. The 250-page volume, produced by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., at \$3.95, was scheduled for release on the 450th anniversary of the Anabaptist movement which began on January 21, 1525, when a dozen or so men had trudged through the snow to the home of Felix Manz in Zurich.

The Large Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren describes what happened: “After the prayer, George of the House of Jacob stood up and besought Conrad Grebel for God’s sake to baptize him with the true Christian Baptism upon his faith and knowledge. And when he knelt down with such a request and

desire, Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no ordained minister to perform such work.”

The struggle of these men to arrive at the truth contained in God’s revelation is a fascinating proof of the power of that truth to cut through tradition and to remove the rubbish accumulated through ignorance. Even though these pioneers died for their firm confidence that “believer’s baptism” was the will of God, many never came to see that immersion was the primitive baptism, but they prepared the way for the rest of us to see it.

The Tool Chest (26)

Christian Standard (February 1, 1976): 10

Christian Standard

In his farewell address, delivered in 1796, George Washington urged his fellow citizens to “guard against the imposture of pretended patriotism.” In a speech to the American Legion convention in August, 1952, Adlai F. Stevenson said, “I venture to suggest that patriotism is not a short and frenzied outburst of emotion, but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime.” I agree with both the warning and the definition.

An attractive thirty-two-page book by Perry C. Cotham, professor of political science at David Lipscomb College, entitled *How Shall Christians Celebrate the Bicentennial?* has recently been published by Baker Book House. This timely little pocket-size volume is sixty cents per copy and it deserves wide distribution. Since it honestly faces up to many of our current problems and attitudes it should be read by men and women of conviction to help them separate the chaff from the wheat in the welter of voices now being raised. Perhaps congregations should supply one to each family group on their roster, but even more important is the distribution by individuals to every member of the civic or luncheon clubs to which they belong.

The back cover explains the three key ideas of the dissertation as follows: (1) An appreciation for how effectively the American system has worked, even through times of acute crises; (2) A renewal of loyalties to our great ideals, concepts and

institutions— to rise above a narrow and exclusive loyalty to men, factions, and political parties; (3) A deepened sense of gratitude for all our human and natural resources.

The author writes: “The Declaration of Independence is more than a faded parchment in our national archives. It is radically relevant and contemporary. Are not its principles and arguments still valid today? This document is worthy of careful study by those who would understand human events and human ideals.” To this I add my own “Amen.” □ Mr. Ketcherside is a Christian writer living in St. Louis, Mo.

The Tool Chest (26)

Christian Standard (February 1, 1976): 10

Christian Standard

NORMAN VINCENT PEALE, in an article under the heading, “Read Your Way to Success,” lists ten suggestions for taking advantage of every spare minute for self-improvement. He urges that you carry a book with you everywhere you go, and points out the evident truth, “Never forget that a book in your hand is worth a whole row of bookcases back home.”

Two little books you should slip in your coat pocket were written by **Clifford A. Wilson**, former director of the Australian Institute of Archaeology, and presently director of Word of Truth Productions, Ballston Spa, N.Y. He is probably better known to most of us as the author of *Crash Go the Chariots*, a reply to the fantastic and highly speculative *Chariots of the Gods* which became a best-seller for a little while.

The companion books to which I now allude are called *New Light on the Gospels* and *New Light on New Testament Letters*. These interesting, informative and popularly-written paperbacks will bring you up to date on papyrus discoveries which help to validate the Scriptural accounts. I am sure you will find it possible to use some of the material in expositions of the Scripture, but the books are worth reading for sheer enjoyment.

It was enlightening to me to learn that when the record

says, “Faith is the *substance* of things hoped for,” it may well have been referring to a title deed, a point to which Drs. Moulton and Milligan agree. There are a lot of lesser things which are just as interesting. For example, it was a Jewish tradition, when salt became unfit for sacrificial use, to sprinkle it in wet weather around the steps of the temple so the priests would not slip. Did Jesus have this in mind when he said that if the salt lost its value it was good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden underfoot?

The books are published by Baker Book House in their “Direction Books” series and are \$1.25 each. You will find them worth more to you.

Madison and Campbell

Christian Standard (March 7, 1976): 4

Christian Standard

Many of us have but a hazy idea of how the particular reformation of which we are fortunate enough to be heirs, was affected by the climate created by the American Revolution; nor do we realize, in reverse, how that climate was permeated by the ideals which gave us historic birth. In this little monograph I want to share with you only one facet of the theme— the relationship of Alexander Campbell and James Madison.

Alexander Campbell was twenty-one when he came to America and he arrived just as James Madison was elected fourth President. Perhaps it was this fact which caused the young immigrant to study the political thinking of Madison, and the more he read the more enamored did he become with the philosophy of government expressed by the man who was called the “Father of the Constitution.”

At the outbreak of the Revolution in 1776, Madison, then only twenty-five years of age (March 16, 1751, is the date of his birth) was elected a member of the convention which drew up the Virginia constitution. He was primarily responsible for inserting into that document a clause which he wrote himself, guaranteeing the “free exercise of religion.” It was one of the earliest provisions for religious freedom in American law, and it helped to create an atmosphere in which an indigenous movement of religious dissenters could live and thrive.

Space will not allow me to recount the numerous contributions made to the Constitution of these United States, by this man who was called its father. Suffice it to say they are among the most treasured and revered of our national traditions. After submission of the Constitution to the states for ratification, Madison joined with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay in writing and circulating a series of papers under the title *The Federalist*. The strong emphasis upon government by laws rather than by men impressed Alexander Campbell, who recommended to all with whom he came in contact that they read *The Federalist*, which was printed for two years, starting in 1787.

In 1829, Campbell was elected as a delegate to the Virginia Constitutional Convention which met in Richmond on October 5, to begin more than three months of what sometimes was heated debate. Among the other delegates were two former Presidents, James Madison and James Monroe, as well as the renowned Chief Justice John Marshall. During the discussions Campbell made some memorable speeches and showed himself adept in the political arena. Yet it was apparent that he was first and foremost a proclaimer of good tidings beyond all national and ethnic boundaries. On the final night of the convention, as the delegates were bidding each other farewell, James Madison said to him, "You have the ability of a statesman, Mr. Campbell, but you have made no mistake in your calling. You are one of the ablest and most original expounders of the Scriptures I have ever heard." Six years later the fourth President was dead at the age of eighty-five.

In 1848, Campbell wrote to his daughter, Clarinda, from England. Apparently the contrast between the two lands was vitally impressed upon him. The letter contains these words:

We can desire for ourselves no better political or temporal birthrights or inheritance than we now possess, and we can pray for no greater honors and privileges of

this world for any living people greater or better than those guaranteed by our institutions to every American citizen. May we act worthily of them! May they be long continued as the inheritance of our posterity, and may they soon be bestowed on all kindreds, tongues, and people of earth, until there shall ascend from every dwelling on the spacious earth one grateful song of praise to Him that hath redeemed man from the tyranny of man, and invested the human race with equal laws, equal institutions, and equal national and political birthrights, leaving it to every human being under the government and providence of God to be the architect of his own fortune—the creator of his own personal rank, dignity and honor.

It was the custom of Mr. Campbell when he was at home to gather his family about him at “early candlelighting” and read to them from the sacred Scriptures as well as from enlightening speeches of the day. I wonder about the discussion which ensued if he read to them the remarks of James Madison addressed to the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Here is an excerpt from those remarks:

We hold it for a fundamental and undeniable truth “that religion, or the duty which we owe our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence.” The religion, then, of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man: and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate.

Flaming Pulpits

Christian Standard (March 28, 1976): 4

Christian Standard

Every researcher of American history has read numerous citations credited to Alexis de Tocqueville. In the days of Alexander Campbell this name, which seems so difficult to pronounce, was almost universally recognized. Today, those who know anything about him are few indeed.

Tocqueville was born in 1805 in France, where he became an outstanding political journalist. After studying law in Paris he was appointed an assistant magistrate in the court of Versailles. In 1831 the French government commissioned him to come to the United States for a complete study of the penal system. His lengthy report was filed under the heading *The Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France*.

What equality?— He was possessed of a keen and observant mind and his ability to analyze conditions as resulting from causes was unsurpassed in his day. This led him to write one of the earliest studies of American life. It was published in four large volumes under the title *Democracy in America*. It was his thesis that in the United States occurred the first full development of the concept of true democracy because then-existing conditions in this country not only made it possible but rendered any other form of government impracticable. Men on these shores had come to sense the fruition of the dream of

freedom, coupled with equality and justice before the law.

Not all that Tocqueville wrote was commendatory. An oft-repeated statement was, “Americans are so enamored of equality that they would rather be equal in slavery than unequal in freedom.” It was his belief that there never could be absolute equality for the simple reason that God had made men to be different. His classic presentation of this idea was stated in these words:

In the principle of equality I discern two tendencies; the one leading the mind of every man to untried thoughts; the other prohibiting him from thinking at all. But men will never establish any equality with which they will be contented. Whatever efforts the people may make, they will never succeed in reducing all the conditions of a society to a perfect level, and even if they unhappily attained that absolute and complete equality of position, the inequality of minds would still remain, which, coming directly from the hand of God, will forever escape the laws of man.

Great goodness— Alexis Charles Henri Maurice Clerel de Tocqueville— for such was his full name— was not ignorant of the source of greatness in a nation. His political acumen gained for him a seat in the Chamber of Deputies which he occupied for ten years. He was then advanced to the vice-presidency of the National Assembly, and afterwards Minister of Foreign Affairs for the nation of France. A contemporary statesman referred to him as “the most penetrating observer and analyst of social development” then alive. It is for that reason I want to share with you the following statement, which I cherish:

I sought for the greatness and genius of America in her commodious harbors and her ample rivers, and it was not there; in her rich mines and vast world commerce, and it was not there. Not until I went to the churches of America and heard her pulpits aflame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power.

America is great because she is good and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

Whether he knew it or not, Tocqueville was but echoing the truth expressed several thousand years before by the wisest monarch who ever occupied an earthly throne. It was Solomon who said, “Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). But it is not a principle recorded in a book, it is that principle inscribed upon the heart, which makes a difference in conduct. And the purpose of the pulpit is to translate into burning, shining, livid flaming action the righteousness described in the sacred volume.

Restore the flame!— I have often wondered if Tocqueville heard some of the proclaimers in the ranks of the reformers. I suspect he may have done so, and if he did, he must have been moved. In the January following the coming of the French statesman to study our penal process, Alexander Campbell wrote:

Should the present advocates (of reform) keep steady to their purpose and use all diligence to maintain the ground they now occupy, and to live, as well as to proclaim the way of righteousness, there is nothing in prophecy, nor in reason, more certain than the triumphant spread of the emancipating principles of this victorious cause.

He continued:

The “harvest home” will yet be sung with shoutings of grace; for in due time we shall reap if we faint not. The Lord will soon slay the many-headed monster which has long oppressed the nations of the earth. The days of sectarianism will soon be numbered, and the funeral dirge of Babylon the Great will echo through all the vacated marts of her spiritual merchandise, from the Tiber to the ends of the earth.

It can only be said to the shame of our immediate ancestors that they did not keep steady to their purpose. They did not employ all diligence to maintain the ground they occupied. They did not live the way of righteousness to which they bore lip service. And if America is to regain the greatness of which Tocqueville wrote we must restore the flame to the pulpit!

Education of Females

Christian Standard (April 11, 1976): 13

Christian Standard

“You’ve come a long way, baby!” This is the slogan of a tobacco company’s promotional scheme to hook the modern emancipated woman into making her lungs a couple of twin tar buckets, while using her nostrils as a chimney through which she can further pollute the atmosphere. The aim of the Fifth Avenue publicity merchants is to make money and if, in the process, a few hundred human beings die of ghastly lung cancer, so what? Liggett and Myers, with that audacity which has always characterized the nicotine pushers, is now tying in with the celebration of our national heritage. The full-page ads blare out. “Tobacco. It’s as proud a part of the American tradition as the Redwoods.”

But I did not start this to talk about tobacco. I want to talk about women. And, believe me, they have come a long way since 1776. If concrete evidence needs to be furnished it can be found in the fact that *Time* magazine’s “man of the year” turned out to be twelve women whose portraits appeared in full color on the cover of the issue for January 5.

It was not always that way. However, even though no woman affixed her name to the Declaration of Independence, one man who did so was deeply concerned about the advancement of women from the servile state of mere household drudges to genuine contributors to the wellbeing of the nation.

Dr. Benjamin Rush was a great patriot. He studied at the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) and at the University of Edinburgh. He was professor of Chemistry at the College of Philadelphia when the Revolutionary War broke out, and resigned to become surgeon general of the Continental Army.

After the war was over, on July 28, 1787, he was invited to deliver an address to the visitors at the Young Ladies' Academy in Philadelphia. He entitled his speech "Thoughts Upon Female Education." I think it is an outstanding oration. Dr. Rush correctly assumed (although I say it to the shame of men like myself) that the moral and spiritual status of a society would be governed by the character of its women. He began by affirming that "female education should be accommodated to the state of society, manners, and government of the country within which it is conducted."

He proceeded to show reasons why women in America needed a different kind of education than those in Europe. Women here should be taught to be stewards and guardians of their husbands' property. They should be qualified to become the chief instructors of their children. They should be able to instruct their sons in the principles of liberty and government in a republic. They must be regulators of the domestic scene and arbiters of the problems arising in the household, since there was no class of professional servants as in the lands abroad.

The good physician suggested nine categories in which he thought women needed instruction. The first was a knowledge of the English language with emphasis upon spelling and pronunciation. The second was penmanship. He discoursed at length upon this and insisted it was rude and illiberal to scrawl illegible characters. (He needs to come back from the dead in our generation and talk to his fellows in the medical profession.) In the third place, women should be taught bookkeeping, and in the fourth place be given a knowledge of geography and

chronology. Dr. Rush felt vocal music should never be neglected in the education of young women in America, and affirmed that “dancing is by no means an improper branch of education.” He was insistent that history be taught.

A short time before he delivered his speech the reading of the Bible had been barred from the schools. Dr. Rush thought this was improper, and asserted that all branches of education should be connected with “regular instruction on the Christian religion.” He argued that “Our pupils should early be furnished with some of the most simple arguments in favor of the truth of Christianity.” He said, “A portion of the Bible should be read by them every day and such questions should be asked, after reading it, as are calculated to imprint upon their minds the interesting stories contained in it.”

I could write a book of comment upon the speech, but I must forbear. I trust you will forgive me for further intrusion upon your time in quoting to you a paragraph which affects me deeply. Here it is:

I am not enthusiastic upon the subject of education. In the ordinary course of human affairs we shall probably too soon follow the footsteps of the nations of Europe in manners and vices. The first marks we shall perceive of our declension will appear among our women. Their idleness, ignorance, and profligacy will be the harbingers of our ruin. Then will the character and performance of a buffoon on the theater be the subject of more conversation and praise than the patriot or the minister of the gospel; then will our language and pronunciation be enfeebled and corrupted by a flood of French and Italian words; then will the history of romantic amours be preferred to the pure and immortal writings of Addison, Hawkesworth, and Johnson; then will our churches be neglected and the name of the Supreme Being never be called upon but in profane exclamations, then will our Sundays be appropriated only to feasts and concerts; and then will begin all that train of domestic and political calamities.

The Death of Washington

Christian Standard (May 16, 1976): 7

Christian Standard

When Noah and his family evacuated the ark after riding out the deluge, God made a covenant with him, and gave him certain directives for his posterity. For one thing, permission was granted to eat animal flesh, and men were allowed to become carnivorous, on the same basis they had previously been herbivorous (Genesis 9:3). But there was one qualification to be rigidly observed in the consumption of flesh. God decreed, “Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is its blood.”

Later on, God revealed that He gave blood upon the altar to make atonement for the soul because the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11). It was difficult for medical science to accept this as a fact, and the relationship of this vital fluid to human existence was established only after centuries of experimentation and laboratory research. That is why a common treatment was bloodletting, or the draining of blood from the body by the physician, as an approach to almost every type of illness. When science finally caught up with revelation, the process was reversed and blood was inserted into the human body in a process called transfusion.

It is altogether possible that the death of the first President of these United States was hastened by the amount of blood drawn from his body. The account of his final illness was carefully preserved by his private secretary, Tobias Lear. Lear

records that on Thursday, December 12, 1799, the General rode out to inspect his farms in intermittent rain, hail and snow, which soaked him to the skin. At three o'clock the next morning he awakened his wife to tell her he was having a severe chill. His breathing was very labored and he spoke with difficulty.

When a black female servant came in at daybreak to lay a fire in the grate he asked her to summon one of his overseers, a Mr. Rawlins, who was accustomed to bleeding people. When the overseer came he drew more than half a pint of blood, and would have taken more except for the protest of Mrs. Washington. Dr. Craik, who had previously attended the General, soon arrived and proceeded at once to draw additional blood as well as preparing a concoction of sage-tea mixed with vinegar for the patient to drink. When Washington held back his head to allow it to run down his throat he became strangled and virtually suffocated. He could not swallow at all.

About eleven o'clock a slave was dispatched to bring Dr. Dick, a specialist. As the slave was mounting his horse to begin the journey, Dr. Craik bled the general again. Dr. Dick arrived about three o'clock in the afternoon, and soon afterward Dr. Brown came in. They held a consultation and decided to open the vein again and extract another cup of blood. The blood ran slowly and appeared to be very thick. The physicians retired but Dr. Craik came back shortly after dusk. Washington said to him, "I feel myself going; you had better not take any more trouble about me, but let me go quietly. I cannot last long."

At ten o'clock that night Mr. Washington summoned Mr. Lear and said, "I am going. Have me decently buried and do not let my body be put into the vault in less than two days after I am dead." A few minutes before he died he took his own pulse, quietly closed his eyes and lay back in resignation, awaiting the inevitable moment. Dr. Craik was summoned from his rocker in front of the hearth. He took one look at his patient and shook his head sadly. Washington expired without a sigh. It was now

December 14.

Science had been striving for centuries to understand the relationship of blood to the life of the flesh. William Harvey, the English physician and anatomist, published his treatise on blood circulation in 1628. The first successful transfer of blood into a human being was made by Jean Baptiste Denis in France, about thirty-five years before Washington was born. He used the blood of a sheep. But every other attempt to use the whole blood of sheep resulted in the death of the patient. It was not until our present century that the technique of processing and transferring blood was really perfected to its present state.

It is a source of profound satisfaction to me, because of my deep personal faith in the fact of revelation, that when science has made a discovery in a realm in which God has spoken, the laboratory validates the revelation. Revelation is the uncovering of the divine mind. Science is the discovering by human minds. Science is the investigative exercise of the natural sense; revelation is the expression of the supernatural intelligence. They are not contradictory, for what man discovers about what God has made is not in opposition to what one determines by listening to what God has said.

Science can only look at the things which are seen, but the things which are seen are temporal. Faith looks at the unseen and things which are unseen are eternal. While science hopes for a substance, faith is the substance of things hoped for.

The Bias of History

Christian Standard (May 30, 1976): 15

Christian Standard

History is the chronicle of man's serious struggles, frightful failures, and temporary triumphs. It is a record of rebellion, repentance, and reconciliation. Leave God out of it, and it is like a pall of gloom cast over the painful progress of those who enter the world through the suffering of another, and leave it with their own suffering wrenching drops of sweat from their pores and bringing tears to their eyes. But if God is placed in the picture, sin gives way to salvation, hopelessness to happiness, and agony to adoration. He can "see the end from the beginning." "He calleth the things that be not as though they were." History represents the footprints of God left upon the beach of that great sea which is called humanity.

I think one can make a distinction between divine history and human history. I do not mean the events are necessarily different, but the record of human affairs given by inspiration and the account given by those involved, or by their posterity, will not always coincide. Human records include a great many legends of happenings among ancient nations such as Assyria and Babylon, but the interpretations placed upon these by their own annalists are not the same as the disclosures of the prophets of God.

All of us are caught up in the human predicament and are subject to the limitations of time and space. We are also victims,

or at least products, of our own environment and culture, and we tend to regard things in the light of our own interests and prejudices, which we prefer to regard as calm and dispassionate judgment. I shall never forget how this was borne home to me when I visited Westminster Abbey and found a memorial tablet to General John Andre (1751-1780).

I was quite familiar with Andre as his story was portrayed in our schoolbooks. I knew that he was a man of great artistic and literary ability, handsome, charming, and urbane. He was adjutant general of the English forces in America and aide to Sir Henry Clinton. His association in our minds was always with Benedict Arnold— ambitious, self-seeking, touchy and quick to take offense at every imaginary slight.

As Ahab had his Jezebel, Arnold had his Margaret Shippen, member of a proud loyalist family. In order to maintain appearances in Philadelphia, of which Arnold had command, he and his wife spent money like flowing water and got into debt “head over heels.” The Executive Council of Pennsylvania preferred charges against him for being soft and easy in dealing with prominent Tories, an attitude influenced by his wife who sought to protect her social friends from humiliation. Arnold was sentenced to public reprimand by the commander in chief. Washington, who personally liked him, made the “dressing down” as mild as possible. To counter the effect he appointed Arnold as commander of West Point.

Arnold was angry and bitter. His wounded ego led him to imagine that he was the subject of conspiracy by his superiors who intended to hold him back from honors which he thought he deserved. He offered to surrender West Point to the British for a sum great enough to settle his financial obligations. Sir Henry Clinton sent John Andre’ to represent the British. It was the stroke of midnight when Arnold and Andre’ finished their negotiations and initialed the plans. Andre mounted his horse and started back toward the British lines under cover of

darkness. Near Tarrytown he was captured by an alert group of colonials.

The fully drawn plans were found in his boots, and he was taken at once to George Washington's headquarters at Tappan, N. Y. By a strange quirk of fate, and through a peculiar error, news of the capture reached Benedict Arnold at West Point, just as General Washington arrived to encourage him in his new command. Without the formality of a farewell, Arnold fled at once to the British sloop *Vulture* lying in the Hudson River.

Andre' was tried by a military court on a charge of espionage. The brilliant and erudite Englishman was sentenced to be stripped of all medals and symbols of rank and honor and to be "hanged by the neck until dead" as a spy. The sentence was executed to the doleful roll of the death march on drums, on October 2, 1780. But a villain in one country may be a hero in another. A recognition of this fact started me on a lengthy research project to learn how the people in Britain felt about the rebellion of the colonists. I was intrigued by what I learned!

With your permission I should like to change from a review of carnal warfare to think about the partisan and factional battles among brethren. As God looks at it, that is also carnal strife. But when the saints divide, the heroes of one group become the traitors of the other. Those who are regarded as the defenders of the faith in one camp are denounced as sowers of discord in the ranks of their opposers.

It is a tragedy of the deepest dye when the sword of the Spirit is no longer directed against the enemy but is used instead in fratricidal bloodletting among God's other children. Open rupture of the body of Christ in a community only brings hilarity in Hell while it is regarded with horror in Heaven. It could be that in a spiritual wrangle resulting in division there are no heroes—on either side.

The Tool Chest (28)

Christian Standard (June 6, 1976): 6

Christian Standard

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, “There is properly no history, only biography.” History does not happen, it is made. If you know the lives of those who made it, you will not only appreciate what happened, but you will understand why it happened. That is why I think I have a better grasp of some of the issues which troubled the restoration movement since reading *The Hazard of the Die*, by James R. Wilburn.

The book is the story of Tolbert Fanning, the man who began the journal *Gospel Advocate* and the school now known as David Lipscomb College. The late Louis Cochran who wrote, among other books, *The Fool of God* and *Raccoon John Smith*, said the book by Wilburn was “a lasting contribution to American history and to the church.” J. W. McGarvey said of Fanning, “In Tennessee and further south he exerted an influence during a long life much greater than that of any other among the many noble men who there espoused the cause of primitive Christianity.”

The book presents a picture of the effect of the Civil War upon the saints which will help you to gain a true perspective. The problem which arose with the introduction of the missionary society is graphically portrayed. One of the things which will impress you was the opposition of the pioneers to the development of a salaried clergy system. Fanning declaimed

against it with force and power.

There is one chapter in the book which is of sufficient value to pay for reading the whole volume. It detailed what happened when Jesse B. Ferguson, a popular young preacher, moved to Nashville to work with the Church of Christ, an integrated congregation of five hundred members, about equally divided between whites and blacks. Ferguson developed views of spiritualism and universalism which brought him under the fire of Alexander Campbell and the resultant explosion was something else!

The Last Survivor

Christian Standard (July 4, 1976): 6

Christian Standard

Thousands of our readers have made a pilgrimage to the second floor of the Library of Congress in our national capitol to gaze upon the originals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The documents have recently been made more secure in the National Archives Building. I confess that when I first saw the fifty-six names affixed to the Declaration of Independence I had goose pimples upon my flesh and felt a chill running up and down my spine. If I had known then what I know now about some of the signers my emotions would have been more intense.

The closing sentence of the document is one of the most profound statements of commitment I have ever read. “And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.”

Of the signers, eleven were merchants and nine were owners of large plantations, while twenty-four were attorneys or judges in various courts. They were intellectually alert, financially secure, and recognized as men of character. But they laid all they possessed upon the altar of freedom, admitting as they did so that, “Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light or transient causes.”

Five of the signers were arrested by the British and subjected to torture before being put to death as traitors. Nine were wounded in battle and died while wearing the uniform of the Continental Army. Two of them lost sons in battle, and most of them had to give up loved ones before the struggle was ended. The lives they had pledged above their firm signatures were given up by some and were always in jeopardy in the case of others.

Thomas Nelson, who received his education in England at Cambridge University, became wealthy. But when he learned that Charles Cornwallis, leader of the British troops, who had also gone to Cambridge, had taken over the Nelson home for his staff headquarters, he insisted that George Washington order a cannonade to be directed at the stately building. This was done and the place was utterly destroyed. Using his finances to pay public debts incurred by the war, Nelson completely exhausted his means and died bankrupt and impoverished. His later years were spent in abject privation with never a murmur about his lot.

Button Gwinnett— whose name has always amused me, as it must have intrigued many others— was born in Gloucester, England. When he came to the new world he purchased a plantation on St. Catherines Island, Ga. A year after he signed the Declaration he was killed in a duel with General Lachlan Macintosh. Gwinnett's autograph is very rare and commands a rather fabulous price among collectors of the signatures appearing on the Declaration.

John Hancock, the first signer, by virtue of his office as president of the Continental Congress, was such an interesting character that all of us should read the story of his eventful life which ended seventeen years after he said, "I shall sign my name in letters so large the King of England can read them without having need for his spectacles."

One by one these men passed to the Great Beyond, until by 1832 there was but one survivor, Charles Carroll of Carrollton, ninety-five years of age. This was the year when Alexander Campbell addressed “A Hint to the Honorable Henry Clay” about the way slavery could be abrogated without war. It appeared on page 86 of the *Millennial Harbinger* under the heading, “Crisis in Virginia.” As it was being delivered to subscribers, the last signer of the Declaration of Independence died. On the fiftieth anniversary of the memorable document he had penned these words:

Grateful to Almighty God for the blessings which, through Jesus Christ our Lord, He has conferred on my beloved country in her emancipation, and on myself in permitting me under circumstances of mercy to live to the age of eighty-nine years, and to survive the fiftieth year of American Independence adopted by Congress on the fourth of July, 1776, which I originally subscribed on the second of August of the same year, and of which I am now the last surviving signer, I do now here recommend to the present and future generations the principles of that important document as the best earthly inheritance their ancestors could bequeath to them, and pray that the civil and religious liberties they have secured to my country may be perpetuated to the remotest posterity and extend to the whole family of man.

If you will again examine that paragraph you will perceive that it consists of but one sentence. But what a sentence! It is launched in gratitude to God for the blessings of freedom bestowed upon a beloved country. It recognizes Jesus as Lord, and as the divine agent through whom divine beneficence is given. It concludes with the recommendation to all generations that they preserve and cherish the principles of the Declaration and make them a universal beacon for the whole family of man.

Perhaps the time has arrived for our solemn and prayerful examination of this statement written on the golden anniversary

of our nation. We are in danger of losing our “civil and religious liberties” not so much at the hand of a superior and external power, but because of the apathy and indifference which is everywhere so apparent.

Freedom in the Word

Christian Standard (July 25, 1976): 4

Christian Standard

Any person who reads very widely in the works of Alexander Campbell soon becomes aware of his deep regard for Dr. George Campbell of Aberdeen, Scotland. Indeed, when Alexander was seriously considering the production of a revised translation of the New Covenant Scriptures, which he deemed absolutely essential to the furtherance of the goal of reformation, he leaned heavily upon the scholarship of Dr. George. The translation which came to be popularly known as *The Living Oracles* has on the title page that it was “Translated from the Original Greek by Doctors George Campbell, James Macknight and Philip Doddridge, with Prefaces, Various Emendations, and an Appendix, by Alexander Campbell.”

Christian scholar— Dr. George Campbell was born at Aberdeen in December, 1719, and was thirty years of age when he was appointed principal of Marischal College and University. It was about this time that the Christian faith came under one of the most insidious attacks it has ever undergone. David Hume, the brilliant and caustic philosopher, who matriculated at the age of twelve at the University of Edinburgh, after having been taught at home by his parents, unleashed in print an attack on the evidence for miracles which shook the world of that day and threatened to sweep faith in the supernatural overboard by the sheer force of skepticism.

Dr. George Campbell prepared a reply which he titled *A Dissertation on Miracles*. Before publishing it he submitted it to Hume, asking him to note any misrepresentation of his position or language which he considered in-appropriate. This resulted in an exchange of correspondence which represented a peak of politeness seldom reached by controversialists. Before writing this article I took time to read again the exchange of letters as well as the dissertation. I am convinced that Dr. George Campbell was a worthy champion of the faith against a formidable antagonist, and I suspect we owe him a great deal for his magnificent defence of miracles as confirmatory evidence of divine intervention. In one of his letters, Hume wrote, "It is impossible for me not to see the ingenuity of your performance, and the great learning which you have displayed against me."

Loyal to the crown— However, I am writing about Dr. Campbell here because in 1776, on a day appointed for a fast in England, on account of the American Revolution, he delivered a discourse on the nature, extent, and importance of allegiance to the existing government. His text was Proverbs 24:21, "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change." He argued forcefully against the right of the colonies to throw off their allegiance. He took the position that to do so would be to rebel against the will of God. Dean Tucker had a thousand copies of the speech printed and sent to America. They arrived just as the people were celebrating the Declaration of Independence. The Tories circulated them with glee. The patriots tore them to shreds as fast as they could get hold of them. Dr. Campbell became very unpopular and was made the subject of a good many sermons in various meetinghouses throughout the country.

Bible translator— Those who are caught up in the heat of political change have long memories, and I suspect that not a few gritted their teeth when they saw the name of Dr. George Campbell on the flyleaf of *Living Oracles*, which was published in the very year that the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of

Independence was being celebrated. Certainly the new translation did not have an easy time getting off the ground. It was attacked by a bitterly sectarian world upon every side. I found it interesting that Alexander Campbell, in his preface, borrowed the following quotation from the preface of Dr. George Campbell in his *Dissertation on the Gospels*.

It has been said, that the introduction of different translations tends to unsettle men in their principles, particularly with regard to authority of sacred writ, which, say they, is made to speak so variously in these productions. For my part, I have not discovered that this is, in any degree, the effect. The agreement of all the translations, as to the meaning, in everything of principal consequence, makes their differences, when properly considered, appear as nothing. They are but like the inconsiderable variations in expression, which different witnesses, though all perfectly unexceptionable, employ in relating to the same fact. They rather confirm men's faith in the Scripture, as they show, in the strongest light, that all the various ways, which men of discordant sentiments have devised, or rendering its words, have made no material alteration, either on the narrative itself or on the divine instructions contained in it. People are at no loss to discover, that the difference among interpreters lies chiefly in this, that one renders the account of things which that book exhibits, more intelligible, more perspicuous, or even more affecting than another. These differences are, I acknowledge, of great moment to readers; they are such, as may show one version to be greatly superior to another, in point of use; yet as they are all compatible with justness of representation, in everything essential to the historic and didactic parts of the work, they are so far from affecting the credibility of the whole, that they serve not a little to confirm it.

The Stage of Destiny

Christian Standard (August 8, 1976): 4

Christian Standard

When Jesus wanted to illustrate the danger of “business as usual” in the face of approaching calamity He used as examples the people who lived in the days of Noah and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Luke records His statement about the latter in these words: “Likewise as it was in the days of Lot—they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built, but on the day when Lot went out from Sodom fire and brimstone rained from heaven and destroyed them all— so will it be on the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17:28-30, *Revised Standard Version*).

There is nothing sinful about the four activities here mentioned— consumption of food, commercial transactions, consignment of seed to the soil, and construction projects. But to proceed in the face of imminent destruction as if life will continue undisturbed demonstrates a distorted view of priorities and a regrettable degree of immaturity. I am reminded of a picture I once saw depicting a burning house. The firemen were fighting valiantly to bring the leaping flames under control. The agonizing family was huddled to one side in the glare with the mother dabbing at her tears. But one of the little children was gaily sailing a paper boat on the stream created by the water gushing from the fire hose.

I shall never forget a news report which I read one

morning in the latter part of April, 1941. It described the steady advance toward Alexandria of the famed German *Afrika Korps* under Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, known as “the desert fox” because of his ability to elude entrapment by the British. The city was in imminent danger. The “whump” of bombs could be heard in the distance. The drone of planes was constant as the Luftwaffe bombarded the British naval bases. But the reporter wrote that the nightlife went on unabated in the city. It was as if men condemned to die were having one last fling before being cut down with the scythe of death. Wine flowed freely, prostitutes plied their trade, and the dance halls were filled with swaying couples.

It was somewhat like that in London in 1776. Across the Atlantic the dark clouds of war were gathering. The tocsins of hostility filled the air. Clumps of men gathered on the streets of New York and Philadelphia to punctuate with profanity their account of grievances. On June 1 British naval units moved in to bombard Charlestown (later to become Charleston) in South Carolina. The heavy wine of war flowed from ruptured veins and punctured bodies. More than two hundred British sailors died or were wounded. Ten men in the fort were killed and twenty-one were wounded.

Congress, which had tried to postpone what many thought was inevitable, could no longer hesitate. On June 11, a committee was selected to prepare a draft of a possible Declaration of Independence. Many hoped it would never become necessary to sign it. Thomas Jefferson, Robert Livingston, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Roger Sherman were assigned the awesome task of sharpening the documentary knife which would be used to slash the ties which bound the colonies to their mother country. It was an awesome task.

But, as history records it, the greatest event in London at this very moment, was the adulation of an actor, one of the

greatest of all times, David Garrick. Having attended school under the tutelage of the eminent Samuel Johnson, when Johnson closed his school in 1737 to go to London, the twenty-year-old Garrick accompanied him. In London he first studied law, then became a wine merchant, and finally turned to the stage. His debut was sensational. When he played the title role of Richard III by William Shakespeare, in 1741, he literally became the toast of the town.

When he became the owner of the famous Drury Lane Theater in 1747 he resolved to make the plays of Shakespeare a vital cultural influence in England. He produced twenty-four of them. Not one was a failure. It was in 1776 that Garrick sold his interest in Drury Lane and began a series of farewell performances of his favorite roles.

The final appearance was to be in *The Wonder*, a play written by Susanna Centlivre. It was scheduled for June. London went overboard in praise and excitement. The theater was thronged. The nearby streets were jammed. On the day that the actor took his last bow and walked from the stage, five men in a faraway colony began work on a scenario which would usher in one of the greatest dramas in the history of mankind. When it was finished the last sentence would read “And, for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” William Shakespeare never wrote anything more profound than that.

The curtain of death was drawn for David Garrick in 1779. On September 23, John Paul Jones, sailing on the *Bonhomme Richard*, came upon the British *Serapis* protecting a convoy of thirty merchant vessels. He opened fire on the forty-four-gun frigate and defeated her, although his own ship went down. He commandeered the British vessel, transferred his crew to her decks and sailed away to France. The drama on the stage of life was unfolding.

The Tool Chest (30)

Christian Standard (n.d.): 14

Christian Standard

We are living in an age of intellectual breakthrough. Colleges and universities are crowded. The subjects taught become more complex. The teaching methods become more sophisticated. All of this leads to an intensification of the questioning of anything which originated before this century. And this means there will be a constant demand for proof of the reliability of the historical records upon which the Christian faith is founded. Such a demand is legitimate and must be met.

Fortunately, there is a little book which you can pass along to the honest querist which will help him keep his feet on the ground. So useful has it been found that it has been translated into Spanish and German and has accomplished untold good among nationals who speak those tongues. The title is *The New Testament Documents-Are They Reliable?* The author is F. F. Bruce, world-renowned as an evangelical scholar. This was his first book and it appeared in print more than thirty years ago, and has since passed through twenty printings.

It grew out of invitations to address university students, mainly in Great Britain, on the subject of the genuineness of the claims of the new covenant Scriptures. I regard it as one of the best works of its kind. It is not light reading but neither does it indulge in theological jargon. Perhaps the chapter entitled "The Gospel Miracles" will be the one read with greatest interest. The

author says, and correctly so, I think, “The question whether the miracle stories are true must be ultimately answered by a personal response of faith— not merely faith in the events as historical but faith in the Christ who performed them, faith which appropriates the power by which these mighty works were done.”

The book, which consists of 120 pages, is published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, and sells for \$1.50 per copy.

The Tool Chest (29)

Christian Standard (October 17, 1976): 6

Christian Standard

“Loneliness is universal. It is common to all. Loneliness can strike when one is surrounded by friends or can dog the footsteps of a stranger in a strange place. It brings nostalgia for the past and creates fear for the future.”

These are the opening lines of the sixth chapter of a book called *Coping With Loneliness*, by Inez Spence. It was formerly published in a clothbound edition under the title, *When the Heart is Lonely*, but is now in a paperback format under the new designation. It is a “Direction Book” by Baker Book House and sells for \$1.25.

I have often wanted something like this to hand to someone who was “coming unglued” because of uncontrollable circumstances. I knew that while such persons were in my presence and talking with me, life somehow seemed brighter and there was hope. But I also knew that as soon as they returned to a lonely flat or apartment the frightful sense of frustration and futility would sweep in like a tidal wave and engulf them in depression and mental distress which would “carry them out to sea.”

Mrs. Spence has written this book for those who have suffered bereavement, the divorced, the disabled, the shut-in, the elderly, those who do not know how to reach out to people, the

mother whose last child has gone out of the home. At the head of every chapter is a quotation, either from the sacred Scriptures, or some other source, which acts as a spark to ignite the thinking for that segment. One of these is a question, “Do you see difficulties in every opportunity, or opportunities in every difficulty?” That’s a good question whether you are lonely or not!

The book is plain, practical, and down-to-earth. It is filled with genuine human illustrations. One does not need to be a college graduate to understand it. I wish a lot of lonely people would read it!

The Tool Chest (31)

Christian Standard (October 24, 1976): 6

Christian Standard

I suspect that some fans of the late C. S. Lewis will eventually have to admit there are a few people who are not “turned on” by his writings. To a Lewis buff this seems as incredible as it does for a citizen of Indiana to discover someone who does not “go ape” over a basketball tournament. Not long ago I mentioned Lewis to a fairly erudite reader who nonchalantly tossed it off with the statement, “Lewis is not my cup of tea.” When I asked the reason for such a strange reaction he replied, “Lewis is too far out for me.” I think he had it in reverse. He was “too close in for Lewis.”

Perhaps the dear old sister put her finger on the problem when she gushed, “I just love our new preacher. You can listen to him and not have to think.” Thinking, for many of us, is like any other unaccustomed exercise. It is painful and difficult. Most people who are lost in thought are lost because they are strangers there. Despite the fact that Lewis wrote “as a layman of the Church of England” and insisted that any “real theologian” would detect that he was an amateur, he makes his readers think.

A good illustration of this is found in the chapter on Heaven in *The Problem of Pain*. Among other things he postulates that “the soul is a hollow which God fills. Its union with God is, almost by definition, a continual self-abandonment

— an opening, an unveiling, a surrender, of itself.” He also writes, “Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to.”

I would like to see you read *Christian Reflections*, and especially the chapters on “The Poison of Subjectivism” and “The Funeral of a Great Myth.” The book is one of a number of Lewis volumes offered by William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and it is \$2.25.

Thanks to Presbyterians

Christian Standard (November 21, 1976): 9

Christian Standard

Because of the religious freedom which we almost casually enjoy, it seldom occurs to us that this liberty was purchased by thoughtful men whose consciences drove them to become dissenters at great personal cost. Those of us who are heirs of our particular restoration movement, which was but one of a number which came into being as the result of the Great Awakening, often forget that it was launched by men who might not be allowed to speak from most of our pulpits today.

Thomas Campbell was a Presbyterian when he wrote the *Declaration and Address*, and even after he had been immersed, and had become affiliated with the Mahoning Association, made up of Baptist congregations, he said publicly, "I am a Calvinist." He made the statement to show that he would not impose his opinion or philosophy upon his brethren. It never occurred to him that he could not be one of God's children with this mental slant.

When Alexander Campbell was engaged in his debate with N. L. Rice at Lexington, Ky., in the late autumn of 1843, Rice said, "No man living has excommunicated so many Christians as he. This charge I will prove, not by his enemies, but by his friends." He also declared, "He has a creed, though not written, more exclusive and sectarian than any sect in Christendom."

Campbell said:

It seems as if Mr. Rice had found a most delicious theme in my alleged illiberality. He glories in an assumed liberality. I desire no invidious comparisons. Still I hesitate not to say, that, truly and sincerely, on the proper meaning of the word, were our respective views, feelings, and actions thoroughly dissected, I am incomparably more liberal than he: for I suppose there are many conscientious, religious, moral, and Christian Presbyterians; and that, although our Savior has no Presbyterian church in Heaven, or earth, yet I doubt not that He has had many, very many, that loved and revered Him in that worldly church, whom He will honor in the world to come.

I suspect that Alexander Campbell never forgot that it was Presbyterians who were chiefly responsible for championing the cause of “free exercise of religion” in Virginia. Had it not have been for their efforts the restoration movement might never have gotten off the ground in Bethany. The state had its religious establishment in the form of the Church of England, and every citizen was taxed to support it. A part of the state revenue was used to purchase land, erect religious edifices, and support the Episcopal clergy.

When the General Assembly of Virginia met for the first time under its new constitution, on October 7, 1776, it was at a time of great stress. Just two weeks earlier Nathan Hale had been hanged without a trial. Two days ago British warships had forced their way into the Hudson River and Washington was in the process of evacuating Manhattan Island. Yet, the Presbyterians felt that there was little to be gained by a revolution if the natural rights of freedom of enquiry and private judgment were to be abridged in the new world.

The Presbytery of Hanover presented a memorial to the Assembly on October 24, under the title “A Declaration on the

Free Exercise of Religion.” It was a powerful appeal and could not go unheard. It pointed out that, at the time when all “of every denomination are united in the most strenuous efforts to be free, we hope and expect that our representatives will cheerfully concur in removing every species of religious, as well as civil, bondage.” It was affirmed that “religious establishments are highly injurious to the temporal interests of the community.” The implication was that the clergy of the Church of England were often opposed to breaking ties with the mother country because their personal interests lay abroad rather than here.

One statement which impressed me I shall here quote:

Neither can it be made to appear that the gospel needs any such civil aid. We rather conceive that when our blessed Savior declares His kingdom is not of this world, He renounces all dependence upon state power, and as His weapons are spiritual and were designed to have influence on the judgment and hearts of man, we are persuaded that if mankind were left in the quiet possession of their inalienable rights and privileges, Christianity, as in the days of the apostles, would continue to prevail and flourish in the greatest purity by its own native excellence and under the all-disposing providence of God.

Religious freedom did not come easily. Many of those who fled from tyranny of the mind abroad, established their own brand of tyranny over here. They measured the consciences of others by their own convictions, and while rejecting the infallible interpretation of Rome, rallied around “infallible interpretations” of their own. Dissent was regarded as a crime against the state, and the dissenter maligned as a heretic. To reject the religious establishment made one a traitor in the eyes of those who supported it.

We can rejoice that the Presbyterians drew up their declaration. It paved the way for our own “free exercise of religion.” If we hold that God’s will was done when America was

led to a separation of church and state, we can hardly deny that He used as instruments those whose open stand brought it about. Even though we cannot share the ecclesiastical peculiarities of others which make them what they are, we should not be so ungracious as to forget what they did that was right.

A University Encounter

Christian Standard (December 12, 1976): 13

Christian Standard

One night while Mao Tse-tung's body was lying in state in China, the Communist Student League in one of our larger midwestern universities held what was advertised as "a memorial service for Chairman Mao." The same evening the Christian Student Fellowship brought me on the campus for "a celebration of the rule of Chairman Jesus." While the other group was reading "the sayings" of their dead hero from "the little red book" we were emphasizing the sayings of our living Lord from "the little black book." It was too great an opportunity to pass by so I pointed out that the communist students were holding a wake for one who was asleep, while we were missing sleep to glorify one who was awake. Their warlord had departed while our peace Lord had arrived.

The Christian kids had plastered the bulletin boards all over the place with more than a hundred posters containing a covert challenge to atheists, agnostics, and skeptics to make the scene and question at will, and enough genuine doubters showed up in an enthusiastic meeting to guarantee a good sharp encounter with no lessening of interest. I began as usual by affirming my personal conviction that there is one God, that Jesus Christ is His Son, and the Bible is His revelation.

The first question had to do with how I could regard as a divine revelation a book which was full of contradictions. I

replied that while I had made the Bible a lifetime study I had not found a genuine contradiction, but since my questioner thought it was “bubbling over” with them I would ask him to “reach in his thumb and pull out a plum” and I would deal with it. He could not do so and admitted he had not read the Bible.

This provided a chance to show that most of those who made empty charges against the Book knew nothing about it personally and were merely repeating hearsay testimony of others who had never read it either. It is astonishing that science majors can be so unscientific about their approach. If they used the same technique with reference to other disciplines nothing would ever get off the ground. It is a little bit like a man who never tastes angel food cake because when he was three years old he heard a prejudiced aunt who never had sampled it, say “It isn’t good for you.” I suggested to my young friend that he read the Bible carefully and studiously for two years and jot down all of the contradictions he found, and then return with a briefcase full of them and we would go over them.

About that time another hand went up. I later learned that it belonged to a boy who had, as he expressed it, been dragged to Sunday school all of his life, and who was now enjoying the newfound freedom of trying to go to Hell under his own steam. He said, “I’ll name a contradiction for you. How about the mess made by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John when they tried to tell about how many men or angels showed up at the tomb when Jesus was resurrected?”

I thanked him sincerely because the question provided an opportunity to make a distinction which was important for all of us to remember. I explained to the room full of students that Matthew said an angel appeared at the tomb, Mark said it was a young man, Luke said two men, and John said two angels. This is not a contradiction at all. It is a discrepancy in testimony. The word contradict means “to assert the contrary of; to deny the truth of.” A direct contradiction or conflict in testimony may

cause a case to be thrown out of court, or render a verdict impossible if the contradiction is of such a nature as to relate directly to the point at issue.

A discrepancy in details does not void a trial nor make a decision impossible. Rather, it establishes a lack of collusion or conspiracy upon the part of the witnesses. If the faith had been a cleverly designed hoax, the perpetrators would have gone over the forged documents with a “fine-tooth comb” to eliminate all of the seeming inconsistencies. That they did not is at least an implication that the accounts have come to us as the original writers recorded them, and those writers “called them as they saw them.”

The records were not written and preserved at the cost of men’s lives to prove to posterity how many personages appeared at the tomb, or whether those personages were celestial or terrestrial. The testimony indicates there was one at least and two at most, but that is purely incidental. The point at issue was the empty tomb and upon this all are in absolute agreement. My life will not be greatly affected by how many persons appeared after the stone was rolled away, but the fact that it was pushed aside and He came forth makes all of the difference in the world. No one will be saved by counting men or angels, but the resurrection of Jesus has a lot to do with it!

The Tool Chest (38)

Christian Standard (n.d.)

Christian Standard

Students of American history are aware of the effort made by skeptics to take advantage of the unsettled state of affairs existing after the Civil War to arouse doubts concerning the validity of God's Word. They printed, many tracts and pamphlets which they placed on railroad cars and in steamers. One such work bearing the title "Self-Contradictions of the Bible" fell into the hands of John W. Haley, who made it the subject of a series of sermons delivered in Andover, Massachusetts in 1872. Feeling the need for a work answering infidel objections he brought out a 475 page book called *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, I read a copy of it many years ago.

Being somewhat of a linguist, Haley read the works of a number of English, German and French rationalists and free-thinkers, making a list of all the discrepancies which they charged against the sacred volume. He read and sorted through the printed works of American infidels who were numerous in his day. Then he sat down and divided the whole lot into categories covering doctrinal, ethical and historical discrepancies, and answered the charges of unbelievers concerning them.

He wrote that he counted it the duty of the Christian scholar "to look difficulties and objections squarely in the face." It was his position that "truth has no cause to fear scrutiny,

however rigid and searching.” The result of his bold and plain approach is a volume which is valuable indeed. It has recently been returned to print by Baker Book House, at a cost of \$3.95 per copy. It is worth much more than that when it is needed.

The book contains complete indexes— biographical, scriptural and general. In the body of the work are hundreds of quotations from scholars and commentators. Wilbur M. Smith said, “The reading of this volume, or rather, its study, is bound to confirm one’s faith in the dependability of the Scriptures.”

The Death of the Godfather

Christian Standard (January 23, 1977): 4

Christian Standard

Tom Paine has been called “America’s Godfather.” On January 9, 1776, he published the pamphlet, *Common Sense*. It made a direct attack upon King George III and presented the case for complete independence from the colonial status imposed by Great Britain. It rallied literally thousands to the cause of liberation from tyranny. It was read on street corners, and was discussed in homes, at public meetings, and wherever men came together. It had a profound effect upon George Washington. Three weeks after it was printed, he wrote, in a letter to Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania, that it contained “sound doctrine and unanswerable reasoning.” The pamphlet has been designated “the match which set fire to the hearts of the colonists.”

In December of the same year, when the American cause seemed to be faltering, Paine issued the first of a series of tracts called *The Crisis* papers. Washington was so moved by it that he ordered it to be read aloud to his ragged troops before Christmas Day. The first paragraph contains the now famous words:

These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country, but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily conquered, yet we have the

consolation with us— that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as freedom should not be highly rated.

Paine became a hero. The legislature of Pennsylvania voted him a hundred pounds for writing *Common Sense*. He was chosen by Congress as Secretary for Foreign Affairs in April, 1777, but was dismissed because of peddling classified information. In 1785 Congress voted him three thousand dollars, and the state of New York gave him five hundred acres of land, the confiscated estate of a royalist who fled the country. It was a beautiful place.

Then, to use a modern phrase, Paine “blew it.” He went to France in 1787, where he was thrown into prison for eleven months when his political maneuverings proved unpopular. By this time he was an alcoholic, drinking himself into a stupor almost every day. In this condition he finished the book, *Age of Reason*, a bitter polemic against the Christian faith. Benjamin Franklin begged him not to publish it for two reasons. He urged that all the kindness Paine had been shown was the result of charity inspired by the Bible, and it was cruel to take from humble people the one thing which sustained them in their trials. But Paine was adamant, and the book came from the press in 1795 with its accusation that the Bible teaches nothing but “lies, obscenity, cruelty, and injustice.” This was too much for George Washington, who is said to have expressed regret that one whose pen had such talent should use it in such a manner as to destroy faith in Him whose providence ruled so wonderfully.

Paine returned to America in October, 1802. He brought with him as a companion the wife of De Bonneville, a French bookseller. He had separated from his second wife a short time before. Settling in New York, he soon lost the friends who once regarded him with such admiration. They could not stand his

disgusting vices, intemperance, and profligacy. He became filthy in body and speech, and his dishonesty, coupled with his envious and vain attitude, drove others from him. He died on June 8, 1809, at the age of seventy-two, in misery and contempt.

Two months later Alexander Campbell set sail for America on the *Latonia*, destined to defend in the new world the faith that Paine had derided. It was almost exactly twenty years after the death of Thomas Paine that Campbell was engaged in debate with Robert Owen, of New Fanark, Scotland, in Cincinnati. In that discussion Campbell said:

But the greatest error which I have to attribute to Mr. Owen is, his not discriminating what Dr. Franklin failed to teach Thomas Paine. This political philosopher, who was, like many other reasoners, *sane in politics*, but *insane in religion*, submitted his "Age of Reason" to the revision or inspection of the greatest American philosopher. He read it, and agreeably to Mr. Paine's request, he wrote him his advice about the publication. After telling the skeptic what risks he would incur, and how little good his work would do, he gravely reminds him how much he was indebted for those principles of morality and benevolence which he possessed, to the influence and genius of the religion he was about to attack. He tells him that he calculates too largely upon the natural virtues of man.

This advice of the American sage applies with still additional force to Mr. Owen. He possesses a most benevolent temperament. In early life, too, he went regularly to church; and from these sources, as from the "good books" which he told you he had read, he imbibed all these moralities and benevolent views which his skepticism has not in forty years been able to obliterate. But his fault (for I believe that men may be guilty of faults) has been not to discriminate, not to assign to its proper cause the influences which he feels, and which he sees in himself and in the world.

Sodom and Gomorrah

Christian Standard (January 30, 1977): 4

Christian Standard

There is some recent evidence that modern liberalistic theologians are becoming a little “jumpy” and suffering from the jitters. Just about the time they agree that something in the Bible is a myth and has no historical basis, an enterprising archaeological expedition comes up with a new find which makes their convenient “folklore explanation” look as silly as a “flat earth advocate” in a convention of space engineers.

The most recent discovery which reveals “the egg on the faces” of the myth-making clan has to do with Sodom and Gomorrah, of Genesis 18 and 19. For several decades we have been treated to the theory, often stated as a fact, that these twin-cities of immorality never existed except as figments of imagination in a primitive culture. It was freely cited that no mention of the two had ever been found in non-Biblical literature, and it was suggested that the story of their existence and destruction had been cooked up by ancient moralists to enforce their concepts by shrouding them in dramatic costume.

The propaganda has been enhanced for several years by a homosexual cult whose members would like to believe that God did not rain fire from Heaven upon the practitioners of abnormal sex. The Gay Liberation Front, which can be more accurately described as The Sad Enslavement Foundation, has come up with two possible explanations. One is that the cities

never existed, the other is that if they were real God punished the inhabitants not for their abhorrent sexual involvements but for their inhospitable attitude toward foreigners. The implication is that sexual immorality is not so bad if you are kind to strangers.

Jude jerks the rug out from under such accommodative reasoning by urging his readers to “Remember Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns” and tells why. “They committed fornication and followed unnatural lusts; and they paid the penalty in eternal fire, an example for all to see” (Jude 7, *New English Bible*). Peter is even more graphic. “The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah God burned to ashes, and condemned them to total destruction, making them an object-lesson for godless men in future days.” He adds, “But he rescued Lot, who was a good man, shocked by the dissolute habits of the lawless society in which he lived; day after day every sight, every sound, of their evil courses tortured that good man’s heart” (2 Peter 2:6-8, *New English Bible*). I hope you noted those phrases “godless men,” “dissolute habits,” and “lawless society.”

Sodom and Gomorrah have been no problem to my trust in the Scriptural account as valid and genuine. Jesus did not parrot myths as if they were real, nor project realities as if they were myths. When He said, “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all” (Luke 17:29), that did it for me. And when He said “Remember Lot’s wife,” I couldn’t forget her if I wanted to. I am free to admit that I prefer to judge non-Biblical sources in the light of the Biblical, and not vice versa. I have learned that if you stick close to the Book you do not have to get red in the face and apologize so often for your ignorance.

But now Sodom and Gomorrah have shown up in a non-Biblical source, and one which may actually antedate the mention of them in Genesis. Announcement was made to three thousand scholars in a combined convention of the American

Academy of Religion, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the American School of Oriental Research, on October 29. The speaker was Giovanni Pettinato. He and Paolo Matthiae, both researchers from the University of Rome, have recently uncovered new data on the previously unknown Eblaite culture which flourished in northern Syria about 2300 B.C.

The two archaeologists have already unearthed seventeen thousand clay tablets, and suggest that thousands more may be brought to light as they continue to dig. One of the tablets appears to be a business document which Pettinato describes as roughly comparable to an invoice. It lists Eblaite goods consigned to the cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. He asserted that the reference unquestionably establishes the fact that two cities bearing those names existed.

I do not think an archaeologist is needed to establish the truth of the Bible. As J. B. Phillips pointed out “the ring of truth” is in the narratives themselves. I can recall how old-timers would throw a silver coin down upon a hard surface and say, “It is not counterfeit. It rings true.” But we can determine from the “digs” how people lived in yesterday’s world. We can handle the very vessels they used. We can become acquainted with their arts and crafts. And we can stifle the quibbles of the critics and bring to naught the wisdom of the wise. There is nothing which will smash a false theory any more quickly or thoroughly than a pick or shovel.

For my part I think it is great that some long-ago clerk in an export company took his stylus and itemized a shipment to a couple of cities, and without realizing it, used that same stylus to deflate a few balloons sent up by skeptics in our own generation.

Revolution and Restoration

Christian Standard (February 20, 1977): 4

Christian Standard

For more than eighteen months I have been engaged in a study of our beginnings as a nation. In this Bicentennial year I wanted to develop a meaningful appreciation of our birth and early history and its effect upon our present. I established five guidelines for my research, in the form of questions which I kept constantly before me in my ever-widening scope of reading. What kind of men signed the Declaration of Independence, and what motivated them? How was the revolution viewed in Great Britain? What spirit operated to assure that the newborn freedom was not “washed down the cultural drain” in the aftermath of war? What impact did the emphasis upon political liberty have upon those men who sparked the restoration ideal to which I am an heir? What enduring moral and ethical values were engendered in the aroused thinking of our fathers?

Through the graciousness of the editor I have been able to share with the readers of this periodical some of the interesting things which I discovered. In this final article in the series I want to express some personal opinions as to the fourth question. You need not concur with what I say in order to be cherished and respected as my brother or sister in the Lord, so you can exercise the same freedom in reading as I do in writing. Although I shall state my convictions as facts they need not be so regarded, and are subject to dissent and correction. There is no such thing as an infallible interpretation of history.

1. Religious movements begin in an atmosphere conducive to their inauguration and at a time propitious to their promulgation. The American restoration movement was launched in the first decade of the nineteenth century because conditions were right for it and demanded it. It was not conceived in a vacuum nor delivered in an obscure moment. The American and French revolutions created a climate of tension and spiritual unrest which cried out for a solid basis upon which a disturbed and distracted world could unite. The crossroads of history are sometimes roads to the cross.

2. The winds of freedom which blew across the new world, so recently liberated from what was regarded as the tyranny of colonial status with its subservience to a foreign ruler, made it possible for divergent groups to be tolerated in a manner which would never have been possible in a realm with a religious establishment, connected with and supported by the state. In his personal description of the meeting at Cane Ridge, held in August, 1801, Barton W. Stone writes:

It was judged, by military men on the ground, that there were between twenty and thirty thousand collected. Four or five preachers were frequently speaking at the same time, in different parts of the encampment, without confusion. The Methodist and Baptist preachers aided in the work, and all appeared cordially united in it— of one mind and one soul, and the salvation of sinners seemed to be the great object of all. We all engaged in singing the same songs of praise— all preached the same things— free salvation urged upon all by faith and repentance.

Stone himself was a Presbyterian at the time.

3. The challenges which were hurled at the Bible and the faith based upon its revelation, by Edward Gibbon from 1776 to 1788, and by Thomas Paine in 1795, forced a complete reexamination of the claims of inspiration and of the position of the body of believers who held to the authenticity and

genuineness of the sacred Scriptures. In times of attack by clever and destructive critics who batter at the very foundations, men are led to forsake the fight for sectarian peculiarities and rally to the defense of basic and elemental truth. When the house is on fire it is: no time to nail stray shingles on the garage roof. One has to ignore mosquitoes during a bombing raid, troublesome though they may be in times of relative quiet.

4. The sectarian spirit of the Old World had turned many of the colonists off. They were fed up with the party intrigues and factional conflicts apart from the real problem of living, and had fled to America to escape them. Thomas Campbell, who knew a lot about religious division in Scotland and Ireland, began his *Declaration and Address* with a pregnant paragraph.

From the series of events which have taken place in the churches for many years past, especially in this Western country, as well as from what we know in general of the present state of things in the Christian world, we are persuaded that it is high time for us not only to think, but also to act, for ourselves; to see with our own eyes, and to take all our measures directly and immediately from the divine standard; to this alone we fee ourselves bound to be conformed, as by this alone we must bi judged.

Alexander Campbell wrote the preface to the first edition of the *Christian Baptist* on July 4, 1823. He wrote the preface to the final volume on July 4, 1829. In the first one he said:

We know from acquaintance that there are a goodly number of sensible and intelligent persons, at this day, entirely dis gusted with many things *called* religious; and that, upon this whole, it is an age of enquiry. We are therefore somewhat sanguine that a fair opportunity presents itself for a work of this nature.

It was in this fashion there was launched what Henri Clay, in 1847, designated “one of the most important and respectable

religious communities in the United States.” It is my very fervent prayer that the ideals and goals with which it began on the frontier will not be lost by those o us who live in this cosmopolitan age.

Facing the Gap

Christian Standard (March 6, 1977): 13

Christian Standard

One of the great certainties of life is that things are uncertain. When dreams are translated into reality something happens in the translation, and any relationship between the two seems to be purely incidental. Most of the time it is not a translation but a paraphrase. The marriage which was to be sheer bliss often turns out to be an agonizing struggle for survival, and sometimes breaks the very hearts it was intended to unite. The anticipated joy of rearing children may become a nightmare of frustration and worry.

Any relationship which directly involves man is going to be far from ideal, and will present problems which sometimes seem unanswerable. It is obvious that the higher the relationship, the more sublime its nature, the greater will be the effect of the disillusionment caused by the human factor. One does not become nearly so upset by an argument in the local Parent Teacher Association as she does by a battle in the home with a teenage son.

It is for this reason that difficulty in the local congregation of saints is such a traumatic experience. To feel very deeply about such a condition is a sign not of weakness but of sincere commitment. If the ties were not strong the tension would not leave such a severe pain. God does not cause trouble in congregations. He is opposed to it. "For God is not the author of

confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints” (1 Corinthians 14:33). But when trouble arises it may be used as a test of sincerity and the depth of love.

The show window and the product— Many are introduced to the faith under a high state of excitement and emotionalism. Singing groups are imported to turn on the heat; an evangelist is brought in to stir the multitudes; members of the local congregation are joined by busloads of apparently happy people from area congregations; there are hearty salutations, a lot of good-natured backslapping, and a good deal of the hail-fellow-well-met atmosphere. All of this has an appeal to the lonely heart and conscience-stricken, guilt-laden mind of one who feels an irresistible tug to become part of such a carefree and happy fellowship.

It often happens that after the specialists depart and the fervor recedes and the regulars take over it was “not what it was cracked up to be.” There is a big gap between the preaching and the performance. What was said about Jesus was true. It was historical fact. But the demonstration of overwhelming joy and exuberance on the part of the local congregation may have been merely the turning up of the spiritual thermostat for the week, and it does not take long for the cooling off period to begin.

Quite often the revival revives almost everyone except those who need it most. It does not often affect the elder with a high regard for his own importance who wants to “run the show” and is possessed of a monumental ego which leads to a “rule or ruin, boss or bust” complex. It does not get through to the pushy sister who stokes the flame of hostility by gossiping over the telephone and keeps the group upset by lashing out at every person who does not see every trivial matter as she does.

Seldom indeed does it change the preacher if he is “a square peg in a round hole” or one who feels called of God to impose his thinking upon all and sundry regardless of

consequences. When one has a “philosophy of the ministry” he will often ride it rampant and roughshod over anyone foolish enough to pay him for the assault upon their integrity, goodwill, and long-suffering. Men who love a philosophy more than they do people will defend the philosophy even if it means destroying the people.

Frequently the new convert to the faith finds himself in a hornet’s nest, buzzing with traditionalism, factional spirit, family quarrels and general hostility. Often he learns that the brethren are not so much interested in guiding the sheep as in guarding the sacred cows. He witnesses the apathy of those who want to hang on to the world with one hand in case they live longer than they thought they might, while hanging on to Jesus with the other in case they die before they thought they would. What should he do in his disillusionment?

Don’t surrender!— I admit I am not too hot as an adviser, but I should like to suggest a few things. I do not think one should leave and become a “church-hopper.” That’s like being a grasshopper and you are likely to get frostbitten between hops. I’m sure some congregations have fewer problems than others and not all of them have the same problems. But they all have some problems and if they attract a number of persons who are running from problems elsewhere they will soon have more.

But the real reason for not leaving as long as you can hold on without climbing the wall like a human fly, is because to do so will take the leaven out of the lump where it is needed, and transfer it to a place where it is not needed. Yeast cakes are not intended to huddle with other yeast cakes. They are to affect the mass, and quite often the mass is a mess.

If Jesus had allowed himself to become discouraged by the kind of a place “which He got himself into,” He would have secured a reservation on the next flight to glory. I am glad He “stuck it out” and I think we ought to develop a lot of patience

and tenacity.

I am aware that some conditions become intolerable and I would not have desired for Lot to stay in Sodom. But if the apostle Paul was anxious to spend the winter with a congregation like the one in Corinth, I ought not to find it too hard to spend a few summers in any of the places I have visited. The problems at Corinth make the things about which we get our dander up look like a hassle over a Ping-Pong game.

The inconstancy of men will never blot out my faith in the constancy of Jesus. I am resolved never to let the church come between Jesus and myself. I do not expect brethren to be perfect in the flesh and I am never disappointed. I am never surprised either. I intend to go on and do my duty regardless of what others do. I am not serving Him to please men, to gain attention, or to make an impression. I am sold out to Him, “lock, stock, and barrel,” and I do not intend to become sidetracked or derailed by anything which is said or done by my enemies or friends. Sometimes the latter are the worst problem and you do not really need enemies as long as you have them around!

Don’t give up, give out, or give in! Don’t allow yourself to become soured on the congregation and turn to vinegar. Do not judge the good apples in the barrel by a few rotten ones. We commit a grave error when we start stereotyping. Eliminate your own faults and do not allow your emphasis upon those of others to cause you to forget your own, even though your own may seem smaller. While you are out hunting elephants the termites may eat through your foundation. Local congregations are composed of men and women, and you will have to live with them. You will have plenty of time to live with angels later on—if you make it. If you do not you’ll have to live forever with the folks you couldn’t stand on earth. That will be Hell!

The Tool Chest (32)

Christian Standard (March 13, 1977): 12

Christian Standard

My dear old Danish mother always summed everything up with a pithy proverb or an appropriate aphorism. When someone bragged how smart his children or grandchildren were, Mom dismissed it by saying, “Every crow thinks its own is the blackest.” Writing about one of your own books is a little like showing pictures of your grandchildren. Those who look at them do not always share your enthusiasm. I’ve been subjected to pictures of grandkids who looked as if they had just been flushed out of the bushes, but their grandparents thought they were the last hope of this old world.

If you do not throw your hat in the air and give three loud cheers for my latest book, *The Death of the Custodian— The Case of the Missing Tutor*, (Standard Publishing, \$2.95), I will understand. It is the most controversial book I have ever written and may draw fire from behind every brotherhood hedge and fencerow. I take the position there are not thirty-nine books in “the old testament” and there are not twenty-seven books in “the new testament.” In fact, I do not think we are under a written code at all. The book takes its title from Galatians 3:24, 25, “The law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian.”

I regard the Scriptures written unto the new covenant

people, not as the law of God imposed, but as the love of God exposed. When we convert those Scriptures into a written code we sign our own death warrant. “For by law can no flesh be justified.” The weakness is not in the law but in our flesh. I do not believe the new covenant Scriptures were intended to be a meticulous pattern or blueprint. So long as we regard them as such we shall promote strife, contention, and division. We need to read the apostolic treatises as love letters and not as legalistic documents.

Proverbs in Today's English

Christian Standard (May 8, 1977): 7

Christian Standard

I think you would call ours an old-fashioned family. We still maintain a lot of traditions we began to develop several decades in the past. For example, on the day before Christmas we always drive down to our old home area where we were born. That evening there is a gathering of the surviving members of the clan. In an atmosphere of animated conversation all of us eat too much as we assemble around the two well-stocked tables. Later, in the living room the youngest members of the tribe pass out the gifts. After we have unwrapped them and carted out the small mountain of paper and ribbon which accumulates, we sing hymns until midnight, and then depart to our lodgings to gather again the next day for Christmas dinner.

Last year I received a copy of the recently released *Good News Bible*. This production of the American Bible Society is called "The Bible in Today's English Version" (Copyright 1976, and quoted with permission). I always arise earlier on Christmas morning than other members of the household and occupy my time reading. I resolved to start on the book of Proverbs, underlining as I proceeded and occasionally comparing the rendering with that of the *Authorized Version*. I read completely through the thirty-one chapters that morning!

It was an enriching experience! A good many years ago I delivered a series of thirteen radio talks which were later

gathered into a book called *Proven Proverbs*. In preparation of those weekly messages I became engrossed in the thought of the timelessness involved in the wonderful collection of mental gems selected from the storehouse of the wisest monarch who ever sat upon an earthly throne. A journey through Proverbs is like going to a World's Fair of Wisdom where you can pick up free samples at every display booth.

One should get ready for the trip by reading the descriptive brochures found in 1 Kings 4 and 1 Kings 10. Among the statements in 1 Kings 4 one reads, "God gave Solomon unusual insight and wisdom, and knowledge too great to be measured" (v. 29). One wonders what would have happened if Solomon had been subjected to a modern IQ test. In his day the areas regarded as fabulous for wisdom were the East and Egypt. "Solomon was wiser than the wise men of the East or the wise men of Egypt . . . and his fame spread throughout all the neighboring countries. He composed three thousand proverbs and more than a thousand songs" (v. 30-32). On this last count he was completely "snowed under" by Charles Wesley, who had 6,500 hymns to his credit.

Solomon was a naturalist, a horticulturist, and a zoologist. "He spoke of trees and plants, from the Lebanon cedars to the hyssop that grows on walls; he talked about animals, birds, reptiles, and fish" (v. 33). It is an interesting exercise to look out for statements about these things as you read through Proverbs. "Kings all over the world heard of his wisdom and sent people to listen to him" (v. 34).

The queen of Sheba must have been something else! She heard of Solomon's fame and it made her a little skeptical. She decided to go to Jerusalem and "test him with difficult questions." She chose a large retinue from her royal diplomatic corps to accompany her and took along a caravan loaded with spices, jewels, and almost five tons of gold. The amount of spices she brought was the greatest ever to reach Jerusalem in a single

shipment. “When she and Solomon met she asked him all the questions that she could think of. He answered them all, there was nothing too difficult for him to explain” (10:2, 3). “It left her breathless and amazed.”

She said to Solomon, “What I heard in my own country about you and your wisdom is true! But I couldn’t believe it until I had come and seen it all for myself. But I didn’t hear even half of it; your wisdom and wealth are much greater than I was told.” The account closes with the statement “King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she asked for, besides all the other customary gifts that he had generously given her.” You are probably familiar with the ancient Ethiopian tradition that she asked him to give her a child, thinking she could thereby transmit his wisdom to Ethiopia in her womb. That tradition says the son sired by Solomon was Menelik I, the first king of Ethiopia, from whom all future monarchs were descended including the recently deposed Haile Selassie.

Primitive peoples tend always to develop proverbs and songs to serve in the closet of their minds as hooks on which to hang their memories. The proverbs serve as capsules to preserve wisdom in small doses. The songs are ballads to help recall events and incidents of national importance. There is probably no more profitable employment of time than to research the God-given wisdom of the ages and see how applicable it is to your own life situation. Now that the parables have been translated into “today’s English” it will be much easier to grasp their meaning without such additional tools as lexicon and dictionary.

I propose to submit a series of brief essays to be presented under the title “Good News Bible Proverbs.” If the editor can find an occasional space for these I want to share with you some of my findings and observations. It will be my hope to help the Bible “come alive” to you. I want to increase your interest in “the world’s bestseller” but I especially want to help you take at

least a one-a-day spiritual vitamin to supplement the kind of fare dished out on newspaper sheets and television screens. “Do yourself a favor and learn all you can” (Proverbs 19:8).

Recognizing Good Advice

Christian Standard (May 15, 1977): 8

Christian Standard

Today's English Version begins the book of Proverbs by saying, "Here are proverbs that will help you recognize wisdom and good advice, and understand sayings with deep meaning." Each chapter from two through seven starts with the word "Son" although chapter four has it in the plural. The chapters are broken down into paragraphs which begin with the same affectionate term. This is the case in chapter one. "Son, pay attention to what your father and mother tell you" (v. 8). "Son, when sinners tempt you, don't give in" (v. 10). "Son, don't go with people like that" (v. 15). In 4:10 the reading is "Listen to me, son. Take seriously what I am telling you." That sounds like a modern parent talking to a high school sophomore who is beginning to run around with the pot-smoking cult.

It is obvious the first nine chapters are addressed to young men and deal with temptations they face. Solomon discusses street gangs, vandalism, robbery, prostitution, violence, and drunkenness. He zeroes in on apathy, conceit, and laziness, as well as lying and jealousy. But he affirms that proverbs can teach one "how to live intelligently and how to be honest, just, and fair" (1:3). He says, "They can make an inexperienced person clever and teach young men how to be resourceful" (v. 4).

Inexperienced— I think this rendering is infinitely better for our day than that of the *Authorized Version*, which has, "to

give subtilty to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.” In the days of King James a “simple” person was an untrained or unskilled individual. Through the centuries the word has taken on the connotation of one who has a weak intellect, who is silly or feeble-minded. We refer to such a person as “a simpleton.” A “simple” person is no longer an apprentice, but one whose mind is incapable of being taught that which is intricate.

The word “subtility” is not much better. Most of us have difficulty pronouncing it, much less defining it. We think of it as cunning or craftiness, but these words once had a good meaning also. Actually, the word “subtle” is from *sub*, under; and *tela*, web. It has to do with fine, closely woven fabric, a product of cunning or skilled craftsmen. One who was subtle in the days of Shakespeare was ingenious, clever, and refined. To say that proverbs can “make an inexperienced person clever,” is a good rendering, but even here we need to understand *clever* in the proper sense.

It troubles me a little that in most places our teenagers are never introduced to Proverbs in any intensive fashion. If they study it at all, it is in a hop, skip, and jump fashion in a couple of sessions in “wisdom literature.” The average high schooler I know is going to shy away from a Sunday-school course under that title as he would avoid a sardine sandwich made with garlic bread before going on a date. If you announced that you were going to deal with “How to Handle Your Hangups” you’d get more cooperation, especially if you admitted having a bunch of them yourself. When Solomon wrote Proverbs he did so to put his finger on some of the raw spots of life.

He wouldn’t listen— A lot of parents become unstrung and think of themselves as failures because their children make a mess out of their lives. After having done all within their power to set a proper example and to give wholesome instruction they are forced to admit their offspring do not recognize good advice.

The parents frequently chastise themselves as being ignorant, and castigate themselves for not having gone to child guidance clinics. It may help to realize that the wisest king who ever lived made a failure in rearing his own son. Even when the son was forty-one years old he still did not know enough to listen to the right kind of counselors.

When Solomon died, his son Rehoboam went to Shechem for his inaugural ceremony. Here he was confronted with representatives of ten tribes who appealed to him to repeal the heavy taxes his father had levied to carry out his Works Progress Administration building projects. They said, "If you will lighten those burdens and make life easier for us we will be your loyal subjects." In order to meet this veiled threat of revolt the king told them to come back in three days and he would give them his answer.

He asked the older heads who had served in his father's cabinet what he should do. They unanimously advised him to accede to the petition of his subjects for relief. The Bible says, "But he ignored the advice of the older men and went instead to the young men who had grown up with him and who were now his advisers" (1 Kings 12:8, *Today's English Version*). They told him to tighten the screws on the rebels and show them who was running the country. The result was the secession of five-sixths of his kingdom to form another government, with a dissident leader who hated his father.

The king sent Adoniram, the secretary of labor, to go and meet with them but they assassinated him. Realizing that he had a first class revolution on his hands, Rehoboam hurriedly summoned the royal chariot and headed back for the relative safety of Jerusalem. If he ever read the proverbs his father penned he paid no attention to them. Laws written upon statute books mean nothing unless they are written in the heart. Proverbs make one wise only when adopted into a personal pattern of life.

How to Be Stupid

Christian Standard (July 10, 1977): 7

Christian Standard

In spite of the many shortages which have occurred through the ages to disturb the economy, there seems never to have been a famine of fools. This appears to be one commodity which, like weeds, flourishes regardless of drought or other external conditions. Phinehas T. Barnum is alleged to have said that a sucker is born every minute and none of them ever die. He proceeded to “rip them off” and relieve them of what cash they possessed. It was not a difficult task in view of the adage, “A fool and his money are soon parted.”

Thomas Carlyle, whose wife thought he acted like a fool, wrote, “Four thousand people cross London Bridge every day, mostly fools.” Edgar Watson Howe, in his *Country Town Sayings* penned in 1911, said, “If the fools do not control the world it isn’t because they are not in the majority.” Nicholas Boileau, the French critic wrote rather cynically, “The word is full of fools; and he who would not wish to see one, must not only shut himself up alone, but must also break his looking glass.”

Solomon was the wisest of earthly kings but he wrote more about fools than anyone else I know. He just about exhausted the Hebrew vocabulary on the subject, since he seems to have known a lot of different kinds of fools. In chapter 26 of Proverbs, ten of the first eleven verses mention fools of one kind and another. However, *The Good News Bible* substitutes the word

“stupid” in a good many places and I like that. It seems to describe the kind of person under consideration better than *fool*.

Stupid is from the Latin *stupere*, to be stupified. It describes one who lacks understanding and goes through life in a daze. Such a person is sluggish in absorbing ideas or impressions. He is always trying to learn but can never come to know the truth (2 Timothy 3:7). Solomon declares in Proverbs “you can kill yourself with stupidity” (10:21). Anything that dangerous needs to be investigated. Here are a few things you will learn about it.

“Stupid people are careless and act too quickly” (14:16). “Stupid people advertise their ignorance” (13:16). “Stupid people refuse to turn away from evil” (13:19). “Stupid people always think they are right” (12:15). The conclusion of that verse is “Wise people listen to advice.” It is true that advice is like castor oil; it is easy to give but hard to take; yet if one is going to skirt the edge of stupidity, he must listen to others. A self-made man is generally a horrible example of unskilled labor. He is proof of what happens when one quits the job too soon. “Trying to educate stupid people is a waste of time” (16:22).

“Inexperienced people die because they reject wisdom. Stupid people are destroyed by their own lack of concern” (1:32). *All of us know how literally this is true. Once when I was in a series of meetings in Georgia there occurred a frightful example of the validity of the first statement. A young man had secured a job in a pulp mill three days before. His task was to supervise the machinery which received the logs and reduced them to chips in a few seconds before sending them on to the vats. His instructor cautioned him three times not to walk in a certain place, but with the cocksureness of inexperience he ignored the advice. His foot slipped and in less than a minute his body exploded in a bloody froth filled with bone fragments. He died because he rejected wisdom.

One of the saddest indictments ever made against God's people was voiced by Isaiah. The prophet accuses them of knowing less than domesticated animals which must rely upon mere instinct devoid of the power of rationalization. "Cattle know who owns them, and donkeys know where their master feeds them. But that is more than my people Israel know. They don't understand at all" (Isaiah 1:3).

The stupidity of those who profess to be children of God and go their own way is further illustrated by Jeremiah, "The Lord told me to say to his people, 'When someone falls down, doesn't he get back up? If someone misses the road, doesn't he turn back? Why then, my people, do you turn away from me without ever turning back?' . . . Everyone keeps on going his own way, like a horse rushing into battle" (Jeremiah 8:4-6).

Adam Clarke thinks Isaiah refers to the ox and ass because they are the dumbest and most stupid creatures. But Jeremiah uses birds with which to censure by contrast. "Even storks know when it is time to return; doves, swallows, and thrushes know when it is time to migrate. But, my people, you do not know the laws by which I rule you" (8:7).

Apparently Solomon was "fed up" with fools and recommended corporal punishment when they manifested their stupidity. "You have to whip a horse, you have to bridle a donkey, and you have to beat a fool" (Proverbs 26:3). We were talking about this recently and one brother said that in his congregation it would mean that all of the members would be beating each other.

John Adams once did a *Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law* in which he drew a quote from Archbishop John Tillotson, who was born in 1630. It seems appropriate in closing my little treatise. "Ignorance and inconsideration are the two great causes of the ruin of mankind."

The Tool Chest (33)

Christian Standard (August 7, 1977): 12

Christian Standard

When man began to domesticate animals he became aware of some of their innate characteristics, and when he found those traits manifested in his fellows, he compared them to animals. Oxen generally balked or ambled along at such a slow pace, the driver had to carry a sharp stick called a goad, to prod them into action; hence some men were said to be “stubborn as an ox.” Most of us are inclined to be a little lax about pressing into the yoke and pulling our fair share of the load and need an occasional push from behind to keep us going forward.

Steven Clark Goad, a preacher and writer of no small ability, has taken advantage of his family name to produce a book called *Kicking Against the Goats*, which has been brought out by Standard Publishing in an attractive format, as an addition to the “New Life” series. It contains seventy-seven stimulating and encouraging meditations designed to help us become involved and to break down our resistance to the will of God over our lives.

This is the kind of book which should be kept on the breakfast table so that one of the messages can be read to the family at the beginning of each day. It will provide a “one-a-day” spiritual vitamin to supplement the regular fare of radio news which is often discouraging and depressing. Or, the book can be kept upon the headboard of the bed, so it can be read just

before retiring. I have a good friend who says that the secret of his happiness is that he always stokes his mind with a good thought before he falls asleep and gives his inner man something to feed on when he “shifts it into neutral” for the night. I suggest that the book be used for gift purposes. Sharing good books with friends is like providing cold water to parched and thirsty spirits. The brief “Goad” articles are sparkling with sincerity and will act as matches to strike a fire in the lives of those who read and seek to practice their admonitions.

The Foundation of Knowledge

Christian Standard (August 14, 1977): 4

Christian Standard

Aristotle was called “the father of the scientific method,” by Will Durant. Aristotle was the special tutor chosen for Alexander, who was later called “the Great.” He was a profound student of, and a prolific writer on the themes of logic and ethics. One of his best known works came to be called *Metaphysics*, although that was not the title he assigned to it. It is a treatise on the nature, scope, and properties of being. It begins with the affirmation, “All men by nature desire to know.”

This says a great deal about man as a rational being. To know and to know that one knows, lifts him so far above the animal kingdom as to create a great gulf impossible to bridge by any theory which speculates that man came into existence by a process of evolution. Anyone who can write a book under the title *The Naked Ape* disproves his whole thesis by the very fact that he could write the book. The only books on animal behavior at the zoo are in the office of the keeper. There are none in the cages.

Solomon also began his great work on ethics, which we call *Proverbs*, with an observation about knowledge. He wrote: “To have knowledge, you must first have reverence for the Lord” (1:7). I never read this without thinking of the frightful damage wrought by those who took an opposing viewpoint. Perhaps no modern exponent of the counterphilosophy is better known than

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, who died the year that began this century. I have long maintained that his thinking directly influenced the German mind and led to the First and Second World Wars.

It seems incredible that one whose rationalizations led him to such dire and unhappy results in his own life should have so widely affected the thinking of modern mankind. Once he was a close and ardent friend of the German composer Richard Wagner, but their gradual alienation erupted into a violent quarrel in 1874, which left them open and avowed enemies. In 1889, after a period of intensive work in which he produced some of his most forceful writings including *The Will to Power* and *Twilight of the Idols*, he suffered a complete mental collapse. He was taken to his mother's house near Weimar where his sister cared for him during his insane rages which continued for more than ten years until death took him to meet the God whom he repeatedly said was not there.

It was in his work, *The Genealogy of Morals*, that Nietzsche wrote: "The noble soul has reverence for itself." It was such self-worship which led to glorification of "the superman" and to the warped morality which conceived of virtues as only those qualities of ruthlessness which gave power to such a character. The amplification of his ideas are clearly observed in the propaganda of National Socialism in the German Third Reich. Here they led an insane paperhanger who had plunged the world into a holocaust to die like a cornered rat in an underground bunker.

Knowledge which seeks to erect its temple upon a foundation of reverence for sinful man can result only in catastrophe. Self-worship leads to self-destruction. Reverence for the Lord is the only enduring basis for knowledge, whether it is arrived at by exploration, meditation or revelation. Perhaps the greatness of scientific genius was never more clearly demonstrated than when the voices of orbiting astronauts were

heard on Christmas Eve reading from the first chapter of Genesis.

All knowledge should be approached through the light of reverence for the Lord. Farming is no longer a simple tilling of the soil. The investment in machinery makes it big business. The need for fertilizers and weed killers demands that one be somewhat of a chemist. Increase in insect pests which can wipe out a crop almost force one to be an amateur entomologist. It is argued that faith is no longer a requisite as in the days of yore when primitive man had no control over productivity and its enemies. This is nonsense and foolishness. Man can plant and irrigate, but it is still God who gives the increase. The earth that is plowed is God's earth. The sun which warms it is God's sun. The rain which falls upon it is God's rain. "He makes *his* sun to shine on bad and good people alike, and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil."* Knowledge of agriculture should begin with reverence for the Lord.

The geography teacher should remember that "The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord; the earth and all who live on it are his. He built it on the deep waters beneath the earth and laid its foundations in the ocean depths" (Psalm 24:1). The history professor must never forget that history represents the footprints of God in the ongoing destiny of humankind. The miner laboring in the bowels of the earth can only remove the ores which God deposited. The fisherman dropping his nets in the sea can only harvest the silvery horde which God planted in the depths.

The genealogist who traces his family roots back to an obscure village does not go far enough. All of us began with God, and it is in reverence for God as our Creator that all knowledge falls into place and can be viewed in proper perspective. The wisdom of the proverbs of Solomon gain their true relevance because they are gems of greatness from God.

The Tool Chest (34)

Christian Standard (August 21, 1977): 14

Christian Standard

J. W. McGarvey became a columnist in **CHRISTIAN STANDARD** on January 7, 1893, with his initial article under the title “Biblical Criticism.” For almost nineteen years he continued, under this heading, to defend the authenticity and genuineness of the sacred Scriptures against an increasing barrage of liberalistic theological thought. For forty-six years he taught sacred history to the thousands of students who attended The College of the Bible in Lexington, Ky., and for sixteen years, until his death in 1911, he served as president of the school.

Almost a century ago he produced a book called *New Testament Evidences* and it became a handbook for those who defended the Word in verbal combat with men who denied the authorship and authority of the sacred writings. Now a revised version of that volume has been published by *College Press* and it will make a valuable addition to the library of any believer who wants to “stand in the breaches” and withstand current assaults being made on the faith.

The author is Wallace Wartick, for thirteen years an instructor at Ozark Bible College, Joplin, Mo., where he currently serves also as assistant to the academic dean. The book is appropriately dedicated to Seth Wilson, a brother who is without peer in his defense of the integrity of the divine revelation. The author generally follows the line of reasoning

and format adopted by McGarvey. In my opinion this is excellent because it is as valid in our generation as it was in the nineteenth century.

However, there is a wealth of material available to us which McGarvey never saw. One of the greatest values of this revised edition is the “Collateral Reading” list at the end of each chapter. The books recommended are excellent and will provide a good bibliography for the student who wishes to major in apologetics; and we need such students.

The Tool Chest (35)

Christian Standard (September 4, 1977): 6

Christian Standard

Once in awhile some “smart cookie” comes up with a book that is a natural for young people in this spaced-out, ripped-off generation. The kids today are pretty leery about anything handed to them on a religious platter. A lot of it doesn’t make sense to them because it tells you how to live everything but life. When you exist in a world that is hung-up and wrung-out, and a lot of things that seem to be real turn out to be plastic, before long your mind is blown and you are in a dizzy orbit and can’t even find the door.

Well, Rod Huron is a “smart cookie.” If you want to prove it, get a copy of his new paperback entitled *Do You Know Who You Are?* Place it where your teenager can find it and if he doesn’t pick it up and read it, you can be reasonably certain he has lost both hands and is blind. The book is so downright cleverly done it will influence upright living in an outright fashion, because it is *right on!*

While we do not recommend it for parents who may not be up on computer symbology, we predict that any dad who reads the first two pages will probably get hooked and be high as a kite on the Jesus bit.

I think that what an old broken-down hack like myself ought to do is to become a one-man book van, and give these

away to high school kids so they can get with it by getting with Him! Anyone who reads this book carefully will get his head screwed on straight. Incidentally, Rod's book was brought out by Standard Publishing and they deserve commendation for doing it. It is as fresh as a daisy, as clean as a pin, and as relevant as tomorrow's newspaper. I took it with me when talking to fifty junior high school young people and zapped them with a couple of the devotional articles. They all wanted to know where they could get a copy of it. So I proved it by the "taste test" and recommend it to you and yours.

Shortcut to Death

Christian Standard (September 11, 1977): 9

Christian Standard

In our day with its moral laxity and sexual promiscuity it would appear to some that we are drifting into a period of immorality such as the world has never before known. Students of history know that such is not the case. I doubt that we have yet plumbed the depths of depravity to which mankind had descended in the days of Noah, Solomon, or Paul. Obviously we are less excusable than previous generations because we have had the example of Christ and the admonitions of the apostolic Scriptures. On the Judgment Day God may show more mercy to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah than to our generation in America.

In the United States the filth purveyors and mental garbage-dumpers are cluttering both the mails and minds with the manure dredged out of the cesspools of their darkened hearts, and the situation is aggravated by the hazy definitions of pornography handed down by some courts. Pornography, which originally meant “the writing of harlots” would turn every newsstand into a fountain bringing forth both “sweet water and bitter,” and make the printed page a beckoning finger of prostitutes luring the weak and unwary person into what Solomon calls “the net of his own sin” (Proverbs 5:22).

It is a commentary upon the moral decadence of ancient Jerusalem that so much of Proverbs is devoted to sexual

transgression. What seems even more tragic is that much of it deals with marital infidelity, and the breakdown of the home. Vice is fought with advice, and much of it is directed toward “two-timing” husbands and wives who cheat on one another and think it is smart to “sleep around” and “shack up.” “Why should you prefer the charms of another man’s wife? The Lord sees everything you do. Wherever you go, he is watching” (5:20, 21).

The nature of sexual sins has not changed, nor has the result. It is true that in an age where moral values are lessened and cheapened, social pressures for righteous conduct are not as powerful, but in the final analysis judgment will not be upon the basis of public approval. For the disciple of Christ the supreme court is not housed in Washington, but in Heaven. The question is solved not by what friends decide but by what faith dictates.

Solomon pulls no punches and purveys no sentimental pap with reference to immorality. A lot of modems talk about “living it up,” but it is noteworthy how often the wise man uses the word “death” in conjunction with adultery. He refers to an immoral woman who is faithless to her own husband and forgets her sacred vows. In chapter 5 he says, “The lips of another man’s wife may be as sweet as honey and her kisses as smooth as olive oil, but when it is all over, she leaves you nothing but bitterness and pain. She will take you down to the world of the dead; the road she walks is the road to death” (vv. 3-5).

It is in chapter 7 we have the most graphic picture. The wise man was looking out of the window of his house one evening just after dusk. He saw many inexperienced young men on the street “but noticed one foolish fellow in particular” (v. 7). He passed close to the street corner where a certain woman lived who “dressed like a prostitute and was making plans.” She met the young man, “threw her arms around him, kissed him, looked him straight in the eye” and propositioned him. “She tempted him with her charms, and he gave in to her smooth talk.”

Solomon used three unsuspecting animals to describe what happened. “Suddenly he was going with her like an ox on the way to be slaughtered, like a deer prancing into a trap where an arrow would pierce its heart. He was like a bird going into a net — he did not know that his life was in danger” (v. 22, 23). In a striking statement which forms the heading for this article, Solomon pleads with young men not to go near the house of such a woman. “If you go to her house, you are on the way to the world of the dead. It is a *shortcut to death*.”

There are a lot of other things said about “men who find pleasure in doing wrong” (2:14). They will forfeit the respect which they once enjoyed and suffer from public disgrace (5:9, 14). They may be blackmailed and end up seeing the wealth they had accumulated in the hands of others (5:10). They may contract a disease which will consume their flesh and muscles (5:11). There may come remorse of conscience and sorrow from failure to listen to good advice. “Why would I never learn? Why would I never let anyone correct me?” (5:12).

I should like to conclude with a significant admonition from 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 as rendered in *Today's English Version*, “God wants you to be holy and completely free from sexual immorality. Each of you men should know how to live with his wife in a holy and honorable way, not with a lustful desire, like the heathen who do not know God. In this matter, then, no man should do wrong to his fellow Christian or take advantage of him. We have told you this before, and we strongly warned you that the Lord will punish those who do that. God did not call us to live in immorality, but in holiness.”

Living by Violence

Christian Standard (September 18, 1977): 12

Christian Standard

We hear more and more in our day about “senseless crimes.” I am not too certain such an expression is not “senseless” in itself. It implies there are some crimes which are sensible or justifiable because of conditions. But the term is employed to refer to actions in which there is no real connection between the motive and the result. The action does not grow out of long-standing malice. It is not committed in a fit of passion or because of violent hatred aroused by cruel injustice.

A good example was reported recently in the news columns of the daily paper. A lad of five years was walking home from the community grocery store to which he had been sent upon an errand by his mother. Four teenagers looking for a thrill stopped their souped-up car and grabbed the little boy. They took him to a deserted house in an abandoned neighborhood, stripped him of his clothing, and tied his hands and feet with lengths of rope. They then began a routine of sadistic persecution, consisting of blowing cigarette smoke into his eyes, nose and throat, while holding the lighted ends against his body. One of them carved his initials in the flesh of the little boy’s abdomen. Eventually, tiring of this drug-enticed activity, one of them tightened his fingers around the throat of the victim until he ceased to squirm. They threw his body into a corner of the rat-infested premises and left. When arrested by the police they could only say they had killed “for the fun of it.”

Another case took place in our own city when two young men wearing stocking masks entered a delicatessen brandishing guns. Such a place is called a “Mom and Pop” store in our area because it is generally operated by an elderly couple who live in the same building with the store. The seventy-year-old man was behind the counter when the robbers demanded that he lie face down on the floor while they pilfered the cash drawer under the counter and ransacked the place. Angered by the meager amount of “the take” one of them deliberately shot the aged and helpless owner in the head before running from the place.

To many of us who grew up at a time in which human life was not so cheap, it appears that the world is engulfed in a wave of viciousness previously unknown. Certainly these are crucial years in which to exist. We should not minimize the seriousness of the current state of things. However, the condition may not be as unique as we deem it to be. One who reads the Proverbs is struck by the fact that in the days of Solomon, when Israel was in a time of world-expansion and inflation, the situation in Jerusalem was much as it is among us.

The danger of young people’s being seduced to join street gangs was a constant worry to fathers and mothers. The very first chapter of Proverbs contains a pointed warning to youths not to give in to the lure for excitement or to succumb to the solicitations of young hoodlums who say, “Come on; let’s find someone to kill! Let’s attack some innocent people for the fun of it!” (1:11). The subsequent verses show there was a moral breakdown in Jerusalem, but the wise man ends with the observance, “Robbery always claims the life of the robber— this is what happens to anyone who lives by violence” (1:19).¹

Some modern students of social behavior hold that violence as a developing life-style may be directly related to long drawn-out wars with their emphasis upon killing and rapine, and with immoral and unethical behavior in high places among the ruling class. If this proves to be a logical deduction it may

help to explain the state of things about which Solomon wrote with such fervent warning.

When Saul became king he launched into a “Vietnamese-type” struggle with the Philistines. It dragged on for forty years. Saul’s army was often poorly equipped. The Philistines allowed no blacksmiths in Israel and the Israelites actually had to go to the enemy to get their plows, axes, hoes, and sickles sharpened. The Bible actually names the fee charged for these items by Philistine blacksmiths. When the war broke out and the Philistines sent a company of soldiers to defend Michmash Pass “none of the Israelite soldiers except Saul and his son Jonathan had swords and spears” (1 Samuel 13:22).

“As long as he lived, Saul had to fight fiercely against the Philistines. So whenever he found a man who was strong or brave, he would enlist him in his army” (1 Samuel 14:52). At the end, with three of his sons killed, and the battle surging around him, Saul threw himself on his own sword, choosing to die by his own hand rather than to be taunted and slain by godless Philistines.

When David succeeded to the throne he defeated the Philistines “and ended their control over the land” (2 Samuel 8:1). Then he became involved in a sexual affair with the wife of one of his trusted generals. This led to a kind of “watergate cover-up” with lies, conspiracy, murder, and intrigue. The royal family came unglued and one of the sons laid a careful plot to take the kingdom by a coup. It was so successful that David had to flee the palace and attempt to escape to the wilderness. “David went on up the Mount of Olives crying: he was barefoot and had his head covered as a sign of grief.”

By the time Solomon acceded to the throne, the ambition to become a world power was taking its toll and the degeneration was seen upon every hand. When one reads the Proverbs with all of this in mind he finds a modern ring about it all that is

inescapable.

END NOTES

1. Scripture quoted from *Today's English Version*, © 1976, The American Bible Society.

The Tool Chest (36)

Christian Standard (October 2, 1977): 8

Christian Standard

It was William Lyon Phelps who wrote, “I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without a knowledge of the Bible.” When he wrote that he was a professor of English and literature at Yale University.

I am for anything which will stimulate Bible study and that is why I am glad to see the new *Programmed Bible Study* released by Standard Publishing. This is a series of attractive books developed by William D. Crawford, president of Learning Systems Company, and M. Pauline Crawford, of Programming Coordinators and Developers. They were assisted by Roger H. Hermanson, of Georgia State University, and Gordon L. Clymer, of Ozark Bible College, in Joplin, Mo.

Designed primarily for individual study, the books make use of a unique method. The text is that of *Good News for Modern Man*, generally known as *Today’s English Version*. Brief “frames” of Scripture are printed in large, clear modern type. Each of these is followed by a “question frame” containing four or five queries designed to test the knowledge of the reader as to the content of the preceding passage. An “answer frame” on another page not only provides a correction list but also shows the reader where he was wrong if he made an error in the “question frame.”

I think it would be a great thing if congregations were to present a copy of one of these very attractive books to each new member and urge him to go through it in his home, reporting back when he had completed it. Our great problem in the church is not vice or immorality, as it was at Corinth, but apathy and spiritual illiteracy. It seems to me that if we will encourage babes in Christ to feed themselves instead of spoon-feeding them with “spiritual tapioca pudding” they might graduate out of the kindergarten “milk class” into the “strong meat class.”

Stirring up Trouble

Christian Standard (Oct 30, 1977): 14

Christian Standard

A number of years ago in a central Missouri city, two elders got into a fistfight across the Lord's table. They were brothers in the flesh as well as in the faith. They had exhibited ill feeling toward each other for several months, ever since one accused the other of using undue influence upon their aged mother, persuading her to change her will in a way that favored him. The resultant quarrel rankled in the hearts of both. On the Sunday to which I refer one arose to serve at the Lord's table. The other went forward and told him he was not fit to do so and demanded that he sit down. In a few seconds more they were swinging at each other, until men from the shocked congregation arose to separate them. The church divided, and a generation had to pass away before it could begin to repair the damage caused by this boorish and unseemly action.

One of the real knotty community problems a half century ago was consolidation of schools. Each area in Missouri had its own district school and rural children could walk to their one-room school buildings each morning. With the change to modern educational methods such schools were deemed inefficient. Consolidation was recommended, but it would require transportation of the children by bus to a central location. Feelings ran high and rural congregations were affected. In one place in the Ozarks the brethren became so angry during a community meeting that some of them would not

even speak to each other the following Sunday. The smoldering embers of hate were fanned into flame and a sad and tragic church split occurred. After five decades there are still two separate groups meeting a few miles apart. Neither is accomplishing much for the cause of Christ.

Not long ago, a preacher of my acquaintance was served notice by the congregation's elders that they wanted him to meet with them. In the meeting two of the five elders "raked him over the coals" (as he described it), because they considered that the messages he was delivering had no real content or meaning. They expressed their desire for him to shape up, and voiced their disappointment with his past performances. He left the meeting "burnt to a crisp," and after a couple of sleepless nights he decided that on the following Sunday he would "tell them off" publicly and ask for a vote of confidence. Because of the way in which he vented his anger and the pandemonium he aroused, the elders dismissed him and announced it that very Sunday night. Some of his supporters dropped out and gravitated to other congregations in the area, but the community is still suffering from the upheaval.

I cannot help but contrast his reaction to that of another preacher who also ran into trouble and was rebuked by an elder whose wife had objected to one of the preacher's talks. Incidentally, he told me it was one of my lessons which he had borrowed for the occasion. Instead of becoming angry he sat down and prayerfully asked God to show him how to bring the dynamic of love into the matter in positive fashion. The next Sunday he told what had happened and asked for forgiveness for any hurt or mental upset, and requested the congregation to pray for him that he might be more fully led by the Spirit. His influence and effectiveness have increased remarkably since that day.

I have referred to these varied situations to illustrate the truth of one of the proverbs enunciated by Solomon. Most of the

proverbs are like well-aimed arrows. They hit the bull's-eye in the center of the target. They are one-shot prescriptions to cure special ills. The one to which I am alluding here is found in Proverbs 10:12. It says, "Hate stirs up trouble, but love forgives all offenses" (*Today's English Version*).

It is peculiar how the law of mental association connects certain incidents or events with expressions which one hears. Every time I think about this proverb I recall something that happened forty years ago. My neighbor was preparing to mop his asphalt driveway with a black liquid sealing compound when he was called away from the task. The open container was too much for his little son and a neighbor lad from next door. They secured sticks and began to stir the viscous compound in the bucket. One of them was a little too energetic and splashed a generous amount of the stuff on his companion. Withdrawing his stick, which was well-tarred, the besmirched one whopped the other across the stomach, leaving a dripping streak of black. This sparked a genuine free-for-all. Before it was all over they both looked like the tar baby in the tale of Uncle Remus. Their mothers, hearing their angry cries, descended upon them and grabbed and spanked them. It was a mistake. They were not only stuck with their respective offspring, they were stuck to them.

I have seen congregations whose members acted just as childishly and irresponsibly. Not willing to allow a festering situation to quiet down, they have kept picking away at it and pecking away at each other. The church becomes a laughingstock in the community. The influence of the gospel is smothered out. The prayer of Jesus for oneness of the believers is nullified. The same advice is needed in incipient church trouble as applies to a wasp nest— keep your distance and don't poke it!

The Divine Scale Inspector

Christian Standard (November 13, 1977): 4

Christian Standard

It is probably safe to venture the opinion that no other American artist of our day has given as much joy to an admiring public as Norman Rockwell. His folksy, down-home type depictions have stolen their way into the hearts of millions. For years they appeared on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* and helped to sail that magazine on the news stands with their irresistible appeal. All Rockwell fans have their favorites and I have mine. It portrays a dear old lady purchasing a chicken at her local meat market. The plucked bird, is lying on the scales, but the butcher has his thumb bearing down on the scales on his side of the counter, while the innocent-looking old soul has her forefinger pressing up on it, unseen by the proprietor. If it could be said without my readers regarding it as a pun, I would suggest that both buyer and seller are playing foul.

The problem of trying to manipulate scales in business transactions is not new. It existed even in the days when God led His people out of slavery in Egypt. He incorporated a warning against it in His law. “Do not cheat anyone by using false measures of length, weight, or quantity. Use honest scales, honest weights and honest measures. I am the Lord, your God, and I brought you out of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:35* 36). Cheating a fellowman is a reflection against the character of God who delivered us and called us to be His people.

When Solomon inaugurated a world trade policy and changed the nation from an agrarian to a growing urban society, the situation became more aggravated. It gave rise to such proverbs as the one recorded in Proverbs 11: “The Lord hates people who use dishonest scales. He is happy with honest weights.” Again, “The Lord wants weights and measures to be honest and every sale to be fair” (16:11).

Completely aside from the moral and ethical values involved, these statements intrigue me because of what they reveal about the nature of God. It must have come as an almost incredible idea to any of the heathen who heard it. The gods whom they had dreamed up to satisfy the universal craving of man for a transcendent relationship were regarded as wholly indifferent to the daily affairs of men. They were cold, calculating, aloof and unconcerned. But the God of Israel was revealed as a God of the bustling marketplace. He watched, the transactions of buying and selling. He knew the price of sparrows. He checked the scales with which commodities were weighed. He listened to the haggling and heard the bartering.

I am quite certain a lot of us have been too much influenced by the pagan concept. We conceive of a God who is specifically concerned with programs of worship presented in holy places we have built with men’s hands and dedicated unto Him. Everything done in such a place must be “just right,” We must meet for regular practice sessions until we reach a degree of perfection for our public performance. Anything less will not honor God. It comes as a shock to realize that God has been observing every rehearsal. He knows about our stumbling attempts to read notes and reach the high ones, he also knows what we said about the director behind the scenes. He might just like the practice more than the performance.

Atheistic rip-off— Our God is particularly concerned about the way we relate to others. He watches as we put the inferior strawberries on the bottom and top off the box wife big

luscious-looking specimens that make prospective buyers drool. He knows when we receive back too much change from a harried clerk and pocket it with a shy grin at our good fortune. I am convinced that He knew when I prepared notes for an algebra test and stuck them up my sleeve to drag out and peek at under the desk. That has been years ago and I am sure that He has forgiven it. But still I have never forgotten it.

The decline of integrity in our social culture reflects our loss of faith in God. When man ceases to regard himself as a created being, a product of divine intelligence, he will have no sense of responsibility to a Creator. During the blackout in New York City hordes of looters swarmed like a plague of locusts into neighborhood stores, sacking and pillaging in scenes reminiscent of those described by ancient historians as characteristic of the Goths and original Vandals. Repeatedly the phrase was used by policemen and other law enforcement agents, "These people are like animals."

Why should they not act like animals? For decades we have been treated to the speculative poppycock that man is but a naked ape, a direct descendant of a lower form, of life which crawled and pulled itself out of the primordial ooze. The pseudo-scientist who taught that man was nothing but a jungle creature who prowled far enough to escape the hanging vines of his primitive environment, has now succeeded in helping to create an asphalt jungle through which he is afraid to walk in broad daylight.

All of the money expended in schemes of appeasement will be ultimately wasted. It will be ripped off by those who exploit their fellows. Never, until we again recapture a sense of relationship to a God who is concerned about daily affairs will we overcome our problems. Until that time our nation will continue to be weighed in the balances and found wanting!

The Tool Chest (37)

Christian Standard (December 11, 1977): 6

Christian Standard

David Edwin Harrell, Jr., is a brother in Christ who is Professor of History at the University of Alabama. He is an able researchist and a scholarly writer. Among the widely-read books he has produced in recent years are *Quest for a Christian America*, *White Sects and Black Men in the Recent South*, and *The Social Forces of Division in the Disciples of Christ*. Recently the Indiana University Press brought out a fourth volume under the title, *All Things are Possible*. It is the story of “the healing and charismatic revivals in modern America.” The bibliography and index alone cover more than sixty pages.

Martin E. Marty of the University of Chicago Divinity School calls the book “a missing link in the chain of American religious movements.” Dr. Harrell formally interviewed twenty-six of the most widely-known leaders in the Pentecostal tradition and diligently worked with the material available to him at Oral Roberts University. The fairness and objectivity of the assessment will make an appeal to honest readers. Harrell writes, “As it happens, I do not share the religious presuppositions of the charismatic revivalists, but in my many conversations with them, I have insisted that my own religious views are, if I do my job properly, irrelevant to the telling of the story.”

The reader is in for some interesting disclosures about

William Marrion Branham, Granville Oral Roberts, Jack Coe, T. L. Osborn, A. A. Allen, and many others. You are taken behind the scenes to know the ambitions, the heartaches and frustrations of those who radiate excitement while in front of an audience. Since this is a great social movement among the poor, it will help you to learn what transpired when the modern so-called “charismatic movement” suddenly invaded the respectable churches on “the other side of the tracks.” We recommend this book!

The Tool Chest (39)

Christian Standard (July 23, 1978): 7

Christian Standard

One of the most devastating books against Mormonism which I have read in recent years is *The Mormon Papers*, by Harry L. Ropp. Brother Ropp is a graduate of Lincoln Christian Seminary and the founder of Mission to Mormons, Roy, Utah. He examines the credentials of this rapidly-growing cult in their so-called “inspired documents,” which consist of the Book of Mormon, Doctrines and Covenants, and The Pearl of Great Price.

The average reader will find very helpful the glossary of Mormon terms, and the more astute scholar will welcome the page of cross-references between the Book of Commandments and Doctrine and Covenants. The author gives evidence of his thoroughness in dealing with this error, and in his chapter on “Witnessing to Mormons,” provides wholesome suggestions for handling their emissaries who come to your door.

He declares that Mormonism is not Christian, but says that “friendship is of the utmost importance in witnessing to most Mormons.” He points out that reaching them will not be easy, but “because of the threat they pose to the body of Christ, and because of our love for them, we must accept the responsibility of trying to help them see the truth.”

This is borne out by our own experience in the St. Louis

area. We have just concluded a series of twelve weekly studies in a home to which two women Mormon missionaries came without missing. They publicly testified that they had received many new insights, and they were especially pleased that they were made welcome.

The book is published by Inter-Varsity Press at \$2.95. It is well worth the cost, and should be read, studied, and marked by everyone who has anything to do with Mormon missionaries. The book will strengthen your own faith in the true revelation of God, and it will help you see clearly why the claims of the Mormons to other revelatory messages is false. We commend it to all who love the Bible.

Ignoring an Insult

Christian Standard (August 6, 1977): 13

Christian Standard

Abraham Lincoln was the butt of every conceivable kind of unscrupulous attack during his time as President. Cartoonists had a field day in their exaggeration of his physical characteristics. Satirists accused him of all kinds of chicanery. Editorials referred to him as an ape or baboon. Yet he moved serenely on, apparently paying no more attention to assault by some than to the adulation of others. He had learned the truth expressed by Moliere, the French playwright, “A wise man is superior to any insults which can be put upon him, and the best reply to unseemly behavior is patience and moderation.”

I know a congregation which is in shambles today because two men got it in for each other, and neither was wise enough to ignore the thrusts of the other. No one knew exactly what started the feud, but it soon became obvious there was “bad blood” between them. They alternated in teaching the adult class and the one who was sitting in the class would make slighting remarks to the one who was teaching. The teacher would retaliate. Soon other members were taking sides and the body was divided into two warring factions, gathering in the same structure to go through the form of eating the Lord’s Supper, which was intended to be a visible symbol of fellowship.

Once they almost engaged in a fistfight when they met at a band concert in the park. Only the decisive action of one of the

wives who thrust herself between them and lectured them about acting like immature children saved them from an inglorious spectacle in public. But the ill feeling continued. Today the impact of the brethren in the community has been reduced to nothing. The church is a sorry thing to behold and the word "Ichabod" could be written over the front door of the building.

It was Solomon who said, "When a fool is annoyed, he quickly lets it be known. Smart people will ignore an insult" (Proverbs 12:16, *Today's English Version*). Sam Bernstein was a good example of what Solomon meant. He was a Jewish "drummer" for a wholesale grocery firm, a traveling salesman fifty years ago, who rode the train into town and called upon every grocery store in the area, writing up orders to be shipped as soon as possible.

He knew all of the salesman's jokes. Frequently he was the subject of some new ones. Since his territory covered an area where the Ku Klux Klan was strong and anti-Semitism ran rife, he encountered some harsh treatment. One day I asked a grocer who had been a little rough with him why he did not resent it. He replied, "Sam has learned to ignore insults. If you threw him down the stairs he would write an order for two barrels of pickles on the way down and walk back up and hand it to you to sign."

The life of Aaron Burr was one of the great tragedies in American history. He graduated from Princeton, the school where his father and grandfather had both been president. He was twice elected to the Senate and served as vice-president with Thomas Jefferson. He might have been President except for Alexander Hamilton, who was his personal and political rival for twenty years. Burr learned of a couple of insults which Hamilton had voiced against him, and demanded satisfaction.

Hamilton did not want to fight him but reluctantly agreed to do so. The two men met in a duel at Weehawken, N.J., on July

11, 1804. Hamilton was fatally wounded and died the next day. Burr fled and was never again in favor. He was tried for treason by Chief Justice John Marshall and finally died in social and political exile. He could not ignore an insult.

Although reformers must be conditioned by their dreams to expect all kinds of insult and invective, few have borne as much as John Wycliffe, now labeled “the morning star of the Reformation.” He incurred the wrath of monks and clergy, who poured forth a stream of bitter accusations against him. Thomas Walsingham referred to him as “an old hypocrite, an angel of Satan.” By the inmates of the monastery at St. Albans, he was abused as “the devil’s instrument, the church’s enemy, the heretics’ idol, and flatteries’ sink.” None of these moved him. He was not deterred by threat or warning.

His is a good example of what happens when insult is allowed to pass. Not a one of his detractors is remembered today, but his name is a shining light to those who dissent from a *status quo* born of vain tradition, cradled in the arms of lethargy, and nourished by those who would perpetuate a form of godliness while denying the power of the Spirit.

Paying attention to insults has broken up homes, ripped communities apart, and created national and international conflicts. An insult may be the spark which ignites a pile of combustibles stored in the heart. The conflagration which results may do frightful damage to human relationships. There are some things one should act as if he never heard. They can do no damage when ignored, but taken into the bosom may have serious consequences. To return insult for insult puts one on the level of the tormentor. It is better to have your pride hurt than to be proud of the hurt you inflict. It is better to suffer reproach than to suffer for the reproach you have caused. Frederick Douglass said, “A gentleman will not insult me, and no man not a gentleman can insult me.”

How Homes Are Made

Christian Standard (August 27, 1977): 9

Christian Standard

For years I have thought that one of the most touching pieces of literature in our history as a people was the description by Moses E. Lard of his separation from his mother and home. His father, a Scotchman, was always poverty-stricken. Though respecting religion in others, he made no profession of faith. He took his family to Missouri in 1832 when Moses was about fourteen years old. An account of the incident to which I refer appears in *The Dawn of the Reformation*, by T. P. Haley, published in 1888.

“The mother was a deeply pious woman, a strict member of the Baptist church, and thoroughly devoted to the moral training of her children. Soon after settling in Missouri, the father died of smallpox, leaving the widow and children without any means of support. It was not long before the family was compelled to separate. The parting scene with his mother is thus described by the subject of this sketch: ‘As my brother and myself stood beneath the little cabin eaves, just ready to take leave of the only objects on earth dear to us, and thus close the saddest scene of our lives my mother said, “My dear boys, I have nothing to give you but my blessing and these two little books.” Her soul was breaking, and she could say no more. She then drew from her bosom, two small testaments, and as her tears were streaming, and lips quivering, she screamed as if it were her last, and placed them in our hands. We all said good-bye and

that family was forever broken on earth. Yet, gentle reader, think us not poor as we turned from that mean abode. We bore with us a Christian mother's blessing, and the precious words of Jesus; we were wealthy boys. To that little book and the memory of that scene, my future life owes its shaping. I never neglected the one, thank heaven, or forget the other.”

J. H. Garrison was another who wrote highly of his mother. In his autobiography, long since out of print, he says: “When I come to speak of my mother I feel that I must exercise great restraint lest I seem to idealize her. Considering the limitations in the way of education and the surroundings to which she was subjected, I do not believe that I am extravagant in regarding her as one of the most remarkable women I have ever known . . . She not only managed her household duties in a most efficient way, but took an active part in planting and cultivating a garden. I was frequently her assistant and acted under her direction. No boy of the present day could be prouder of a new suit of ready-made ‘store-clothes’ than I was of a new suit of jeans cloth she had made from the wool of sheep by the process of carding, spinning and weaving. She was a better manager than my father and her energy and endurance were remarkable. She not only looked after her own household but was an angel of mercy to the whole neighborhood, ministering to the sick and poor and needy. More than once I recall coming home from the school and finding a lot of poor children whom she had brought home to feed and clothe until some arrangements could be made for them. Doctors deferred to her treatment and nursing of the sick.”

Perhaps these would be called “old-fashioned mothers” by our generation. Actually they were more than housewives. They were homemakers. They were wise in the ways of life, although possessing little book lore. My own mother could hardly read or write English. She never took a course in child psychology. She never read a book on how to rear children. But her love for us, coupled with an ingrained sense of honesty and rightness, made

ours a home where understanding reigned.

“Homes are made by the wisdom of women, but are destroyed by foolishness” (Proverbs 14:1). This is the rendering in *Good News for Modern Man*. I like it better than the *King James Version* which reads, “Every wise woman buildeth her house.” It is obvious that homes are made. They do not automatically result from the union of two persons. It is not the marriage certificate hanging on the wall but the love certificate enshrined in the heart which makes the real difference.

A good home is an oasis in the desert of a pagan world. It is a place of acceptance when the world rejects and spurns you. It is a haven from the storm, a harbor of peace. No other bed provides the rest of the one at home. No other table has food so tasty and nourishing. No other companionship is as rich and fruitful as that which we encounter within the walls of home. The paper on the walls may be cracked and torn. The rug on the floor may be worn threadbare. But if it is home there is an air about it which can never be found anywhere else. The memory never fades away.

A gourmet may eat in an expensive and luxurious restaurant and have the memory of his mother’s cooking wafted to his nostrils from the long ago. A man may purchase a Brooks Brothers suit and be remembering the time when he purchased his first pair of bib overalls at a country store and could hardly wait until he arrived at his farm home to put them on.

Woe to the Christian woman who despises home, who looks upon it as a place of slavery, who feels chained within it by the demands of her children. There is no career in which a wise woman can engage which will have greater consequences than making a home. Woe to those who through foolishness wreck the first institution created by the hands of an omniscient God.

The Tool Chest (40)

Christian Standard (May 27,1979): 12

Christian Standard

Recently I read the new book *Knowing Scripture*, by R. C. Sproul. The author has served on the faculty of Westminster College, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Trinity Episcopal Seminary. But his book is free from theological jargon. It was written for the average Christian.

In a cleverly-written foreword, J. I. Packer of Trinity College, Bristol, England, says, "If I were the devil, one of my first aims would be to stop people from digging into the Bible . . . I should do all I could to surround it with the spiritual equivalent of pits, thorns, hedges, and man-traps . . . But I should be very far from pleased to see this book by R. C. Sproul."

The book is divided into six sections. The final one is titled, "Practical Tools for Bible Study." In it are discussed translations, commentaries, concordances, dictionaries, and atlases. There is also a suggested Bible reading program for beginners. In his conclusion the author writes, "I believe that a crucial key for church renewal is to be found in adult education. I dream of a multitude of articulate and knowledgeable Christians making a new impact upon our land. That dream cannot be realized unless we know and use the tools of intelligent Bible study."

I think I like best the section called “Hermeneutics: The Science of Interpretation.” The author deals with such problems as metaphor, source criticism, authorship and dating, and grammatical errors. He is particularly acute with regard to the last, taking the position that “both principles of inspiration and inerrancy allow for grammatical error as the principles have been formulated.”

The book is a paperback and contains 125 pages. It is a product of Inter-Varsity Press. The cost is \$3.50. As Packer says, “Its special qualities are clarity, common sense, mastery of material and a bubbling enthusiasm which turns the author from a good communicator into a superb one.”

The Dynamic of God

Christian Standard (July 31, 1983): 12

Christian Standard

First in a series of six studies on the power of God

It is probably impossible to understand the power of God without giving some attention to the Greek words that are translated by the term. The Greek language was the most versatile upon earth and the Spirit of God had an instrument ready and at hand when He gave us the revelation from Heaven. And it is fortunate indeed that, guided by providence, the Spirit did not employ the language of the philosophers, but the common language of the sidewalks. It was the vernacular of the people, the everyday speech of the masses which came under Greek influence by the sweeping conquests of Alexander the Great.

F. F. Bruce wrote: "There are few human pursuits more fascinating than the study of words." To this statement I give my hearty assent. Of all the little volumes that have been my companions in my own search, none is more welcome than *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine. It lists almost fifty different terms under "come." And there are six under "power." They are *dunamis*, *exousia*, *ischus*, *kratos*, *dunaton*, and *arche*. It would be a work of joy to distinguish between these, but neither time nor space will permit. We shall forego the pleasure and defer to each reader's personal interest and inclination.

It occurs to me that “ability” runs like a thread through all of these. Power without ability to perform is not power at all. But there is a difference. In *dunamis* the ability is inherent; in *exousia* it is acquired, designated or assigned. Dynamite (which we derive from *dunamis*) has power which is part of itself by its nature. A dynamo produces power in and of itself. This should help us to correct certain errors of thought into which it is easy to slip.

God exercises His power upon three levels which, for want of a better way of expressing it, we may designate natural, providential, and supernatural. The initial chapter of Genesis details for us the beginning of the natural power insofar as our material universe is concerned. Of course, it will be recognized that the distinctions are purely for our benefit as finite beings. The nature of deity is such that it is as natural for God to perform providential and supernatural acts as it is for me to walk. Nothing is supernatural for God. Power adheres to God as a result of being God. He does not create power, but His power creates.

God said: “Let the land produce vegetation: seedbearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds” (Genesis 1:11). The record adds: “And it was so.” Thus God not only brought His direct power into action but projected power into the future which we can see demonstrated today. I thought of this recently when I was west of the Continental Divide in a great peach and apricot growing area. There was a bountiful harvest of luscious fruit, but all of it began thousands of years ago with the Word of God speaking to the original trees, of which those before me were the direct offspring.

Two years ago I was in the heart of the great wheat belt. Combines were whining their way through what looked like endless fields of ripened grain. Elevators were already filled to capacity and the wheat was being stored in huge piles upon the

ground. I thought of the millions of loaves of bread baked all over the world and of the hungry mouths being fed. It came to me that it was all a demonstration of the one whom I can address as Father. I bowed my head in humble gratitude.

It is axiomatic that only life can beget life. So it is not surprising that God created man in His own image, and that He made them male and female. God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it” (1:28). In our generation the habitable earth is fast being filled and is rapidly being subdued. Sometimes it is becoming ravaged and exploited. The term “endangered species” has become part of our vocabulary. Such abuse is not in harmony with the Word of God, but is part of man’s disregard for the bounties God has provided. It is usurpation of the power of God by unwilling subjects.

Man sinned. And eventually God had to disrupt His progress with a destructive flood. Every living creature on the face of the earth was wiped out with the exception of those within the ark. But when they came forth, God declared that He would never again destroy all living creatures in that manner. He promised, “As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease” (Genesis 8:22). As we grow older we are affected by climatic extremes as well as by changing seasons. But we should regard these as voiceless testimonials to the power of God.

Because of the continuity of nature there has grown up an idea that God placed it under certain laws which operate inexorably. But in Hebrews 1:3 Jesus is said to uphold all things by the power of His Word. The word “uphold” means “to sustain.” All things were created by the power of His Word; all things are sustained by the word of His power. It is possible that Jesus may bring His power to bear upon all things with consistency and unvarying application so that it appears to our human awareness as being governed and regulated by laws.

Perhaps this was the problem of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin who were deists. They acknowledged the existence of God but could not bring themselves to believe that God was interested in or concerned with the earth or those who inhabited it. Sometimes it is said that they held that the Creator had wound the clock of creation in the beginning and was now awaiting its running down. Occasionally in their day, a fanatical prophet arose declaring the imminent approach of the end of all things. This drove them deeper into their non-miraculous viewpoint. They did not realize that in the uniformity of day and night and of the succession of the seasons they were seeing divine power brought to bear in the natural realm.

The line between superstition and faith is sometimes a thin one. Superstition originally meant “standing still at”—that is a standing in fear or amazement. It refers to a belief in and a reverence of things which are no proper objects of worship. Faith is the belief of credible testimony. When Paul healed a cripple at Lystra, the people went wild. They cried out, “The gods have come down in human form.” They called Barnabas “Zeus,” and Paul “Hermes.” The priest of Zeus brought bulls and wreaths to offer sacrifices to them. Paul and Barnabas were visibly shaken. They tore their clothing and ran into the crowd screaming and shouting, “Why are you doing this? We are only men and women like you. We’re bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the true God, who made Heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them.”

This news was not as welcome as it might appear. Those who have deified men do not want their heroes deflated. They do not want to know that their gods are men like themselves. So the apostles remarked that in the past God had let nations go their own way. They remarked, “Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy” (Acts 14:17). It is interesting that the pagans, who had ignored through the years

the constant testimony of God held continuously before their eyes, could go into fanatical frenzy at one demonstration by two men. Yet that is characteristic of thousands in our day.

They will stand in long lines, tired and crippled, with some disease either real or imaginary, before a Katherine Kuhlman or an Oral Roberts, to be touched and to fall backward into the hands of waiting assistants. Yet many of them have a poor track record for running with patience the race that is set before them. I suspect that like other faithless generations of the past the cry is, "Show us a sign that we may believe." But the words of Jesus come through with increasing clarity, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29).

The Hand of God

Christian Standard (August 7, 1983): 10

Christian Standard

The word “providence” occurs in the Bible only once. It was used by the flattering, self-seeking lawyer, Tertullus, in his address to the Roman procurator Felix. “Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation, by thy providence” (Acts 24:2). The word means forethought.

While the word is not found elsewhere in the Scripture the idea implied in it appears repeatedly. Especially is this true in the teaching of Jesus who often speaks of the providential concern of God for the world, who “makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends his rain upon the just and unjust.” Let me make clear, then, what I mean by the exercise of what we call power upon the providential level. It is the bringing together of the forces of nature, or the ordering of events and circumstances, to achieve the divine purpose. And it is the doing of this by the power of the divine mind regulating and arranging these things.

It must always be remembered that the providential never makes use of or borrows from the supernatural. It is always a calling into usage of the purely natural, but in such a manner as could not be done by merely human ability. It is this fact which causes many to attribute to the supernatural, things which are not supernatural at all. It is easy to be lured into branding as a

“miracle” things which are not supernatural at all, but are merely providential. Many healings are called miraculous in which there is no element of a miracle present. Divine intervention entered in, but in the form of providence. When everything is a miracle, nothing is. We should never confuse credulity with faith in God. One does no honor to our God by assuming or affirming that it requires a direct act of His power, to accomplish what could be done by natural acts in proper correlation with each other.

It seems to me, as a firm believer in God, that it is a necessary corollary to believe in providence. The world can no more be governed or sustained by chance, than it could have been created by chance. The same features about it which indicate that it had to be the product of an intelligent being, also indicate that it must be governed by the same kind of being. It seems ridiculous to assert that chance, which acts by no rule, counsel, or design, can produce a world that clearly exhibits all the marks and characteristics of a remarkable wisdom in its creation. Yet it seems even more absurd to infer that chance could preserve and uphold, repair and renew, all the things that have been made. To do this it would have to give laws to nature and impose upon it a need to act regularly and uniformly which would put an end to chance, and inaugurate necessity and fate.

The psalmist attributes not only the creation but the preservation of all things to God. He commands them to praise His name because of this (Psalm 148:3-6). That which owes its very existence to power must depend upon the power that made it. It can have no principle of self-preservation independent of its cause.

Seen in Scripture— Let us now consider some of the cases in the Word of God in which providence played a significant role. Of the many available we shall deal first with the circumstances surrounding the birth and infancy of Jesus. Of course the way in which He fulfilled minute prophecies would

have to be mentioned if we were dealing with the theme in its fulness, but we shall have to forego references to that part of our subject. Let us begin then with the selection of the mother. How did it happen that Mary was selected out of all the young girls then alive? Certainly God did not cast lots to make the selection, the customary method of that day.

Mary was in the right family tree, she was obedient, and cooperative, and trusted God implicitly. Although engaged to Joseph, she willingly submitted to the Spirit of God and was impregnated with the holy seed. It was necessary that she give birth in Bethlehem according to the prophet. But there was no way to get one heavy with child to make the long journey merely for gratification of the desire for travel. So God moved the whole world to get one Jewish maiden to where she should be. In far-off Rome He touched the heart of Augustus Caesar. Without any realization that he was playing a major role in the drama of the ages, he issued a decree that the whole world should be enrolled for taxation. And they must be enrolled at the city where their fathers were born.

So Joseph and Mary went into Judea, to the city of David, called Bethlehem “because he was of the house and lineage of David.” Even the town was providentially chosen and named. Bethlehem means “house of bread.” Here the true bread from Heaven came down. It was well that there was no room in the inn, for had the child been born there, no doubt the humble shepherds, dressed in their sweaty and smelly garments would have been denied admittance. But these sharp-eyed men who missed little that went on in the fields with their flock by night were dispatched by an angelic choir. They came and found the babe lying in a manger.

It was not to politicians, officials of the government, or special delegates that the information came, but to “certain poor shepherds.” When they had seen the baby they made known far and near what the angels had told them. All who heard them

talking wondered at these things, which were told them by the shepherds. And Luke (who may have interviewed Mary) records that Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Everything that happened was providentially arranged, but I must desist from the desire to write about all of them and refer to but one more. God was fully aware that the child would arouse the jealous wrath of Herod the Great, and be forced to flee into Egypt, the nearest providence not under the jurisdiction of Rome. He knew that to subsist in a foreign country would require money. So He motivated Wise-men (how many we do not know) in the East. These Persian magi were watching for some announcement of His advent. Being astronomers of note, they saw a star which they judged to be His and immediately set out for Jerusalem.

They made inquiry. Brilliant students of the Jewish law told them Bethlehem was the place. They were overjoyed when, coming outside the palace, they again saw “his star” which they had seen in the East. When they arrived where He was they paid tribute to Him as a king, giving Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. We learn from ancient historians that these were traditional gifts for royalty and it is astounding that these Wise-men could discern in the squirming babe, the son of a peasant girl, the future King that He was to become.

But there was more to their gifts than that. Gold was the medium of exchange anywhere, in the world. But frankincense and myrrh found their best markets in Egypt. That was because of the Egyptian method of preparing the dead for the afterlife. It was firmly believed that the dead would live on in the vale of the shades, provided they received proper preparation and burial. This accounts for the rearing of the huge pyramids, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, as the tombs of the kings. Frankincense (so called because it was free in giving off its odor) was used during the process of preparing the body, and myrrh was used in embalming. The mummified remains still available

to our sight in museums demonstrate how thoroughly they were prepared.

In providing His providential care, God covered the world of that day from Rome to Persia, as well as from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Yet He did nothing that might be called “miraculous.” Kings were always issuing decrees, inns were always filled for special occasions, shepherds were always visiting stables, and camel caravans regularly went down to Egypt bearing spices, balm, and myrrh (Genesis 37:25). But God “put it all together.” And that was providence—the ordering or arranging of disconnected events in such a manner that they come into focus at a given historical point by the power of God. Joseph could not have arranged it, Mary could not have done do, the shepherds could not, the Wise-men could not, but God could and did. And we see in it, as we look back upon it, the hand of God. Praise His name!

Providence and History

Christian Standard (August 14, 1983): 6

Christian Standard

The golden thread of God's providence is woven into all history. It is especially seen in the Bible, much of which is a record of the history of His dealings with His chosen people and those whom they encountered.

The real difference between sacred and profane history may not be in the content but in the method of recording. Sacred history is revealed by God to certain individuals selected to write it. Profane history is the writing of events by those who experienced them or received their knowledge from others. If they were accurate in their records, those records will dovetail with what the divinely chosen men have written.

God, in His infinity and uninhibited by time, can and often does reveal things before they happen. This is called prophecy. The difference between prophecy and history is that prophecy is a record of events before they happen, while history is a record of them after they happen. The record of things before they transpire coupled with the validation afterwards offers a powerful argument for the divine origin of prophecy.

This has nothing to do with so-called present-day prophets, such as Jeane Dixon, about half of whose predictions come true. They are educated or sophisticated guesses (although some of them seem to lack even education). No prophet of God ever

sought exploitation through tabloids and sensational magazines. The popularity of people like Miss Dixon is not attributable to special powers which she possesses, but to the gullibility of modern men and women.

Joseph's life— Nothing that ever happens is wholly unrelated. And everything bears testimony to God's power in one way or another. Two outstanding cases of providence in the Bible are those of Joseph and Esther. Let me consider the first. When every nation had chosen its own gods, the God of Heaven chose a nation. He did so by calling one man (for every nation must begin there). From this one man a family develops, then a clan, a tribe, and finally a nation. When the descendants of Abraham were still a family, God knew that they would have to be disciplined and trained to become a nation. It is impossible to form a cohesive nation out of nomads. So God had to place them in the most advanced culture of their day. That culture was represented by Egypt.

They were held there long enough to burn the wanderlust out of them. They learned to make bricks, to do construction work, and actually built two great storage cities, Pithom and Ramses. They became skilled in arts and crafts, and versed in the economics of the day. They knew the system of irrigation and even learned embalming, the method of preserving their dead. It was only then that God led them out. Even when delivered they were always wanting to go back. The urge became so strong that once they attempted to stone Moses and they actually chose a leader to return them to bondage. After forty years of severity in the wilderness, God led them into a land made ready for their hand.

It was not easy to get them into Egypt in the first place. God took advantage of the special favor shown Joseph by his father, and the envy this aroused in his brothers. A special coat of many pieces (plus two boyhood dreams Joseph told) served to augment the jealousy. The hatred boiled over when the father

sent him out to see them and report to him on their welfare. They stripped him of his coat and flung him into a dry pit. While eating lunch they looked up to see a camel caravan belonging to Ishmaelites heading for Egypt. At the suggestion from Judah they took him up from the pit and bargained with the traders, selling him to them for twenty pieces of silver.

The slave traders sold him to Potiphar, captain of the guard for Pharaoh. He was soon made overseer of his house, in charge of everything. He was handsome and good-looking. The sex-hungry wife of Potiphar tried repeatedly to seduce him. When he refused to be allured by her charms, she lied about him. His master had him cast into the prison where the king's prisoners were confined. Soon the warden committed all the prisoners to his care and whatever was done had to be by his consent. A little later the king became offended at his chief baker and chief cupbearer. They were remanded to custody and came under the care of Joseph.

One night both had a dream. The next day Joseph told them the meaning of their dream and requested the chief cupbearer to mention him to Pharaoh. He said, "For I was indeed stolen out of the land of the Hebrews; and here also I have done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon" (Genesis 40:15). The chief butler proceeded immediately to forget Joseph. Two years went by. The Pharaoh had two dreams which none of the palace wise men or Egyptian magicians could explain. The cupbearer confessed his lapse of memory, and Joseph came in and told the king there would be seven years of packed harvest in "the bread basket of the world." This would be followed by seven years of famine in which the Nile would not overflow. Joseph suggested storing the grain during the years of plenty and administering it for a certain amount during the years of famine. Pharaoh appointed him Food Administrator of Egypt, second in authority to the king himself.

Thus far God had used the love of a father, the jealousy of

half-brothers, the greed of slave traders, the sexual proclivities of a woman, the desire of a jailer to shift his work burden, the guilt of two officers of the king, and the disquieting dreams of the Pharaoh to move Joseph into the palace. All of these are human traits. God put them together in such a manner that they would accomplish the divine purpose.

But the famine reached into Palestine where Jacob still lived. Joseph's brethren heard there was corn being sold in Egypt and finally persuaded their father to allow them to make the long trip. It is not necessary for me to recount all the providential details.

The men were recognized by Joseph who kept one of them as a hostage until Benjamin would come down. When that happened, the silver cup of Joseph was hidden in Benjamin's sack of grain. The Egyptian "secret police" stopped them, made a search, found the cup and returned the whole retinue. Judah made a startling confession of his part in the scheme to sell Joseph, and Joseph revealed his identity to them in a plot stranger than fiction. So Jacob was brought to Egypt at the age of 130 years. He was permitted to dwell in the delta region of the Nile and died seventeen years later.

When they returned from the funeral and burial, the brothers had a feeling of guilt as oppressive as a thick cloud hanging over. They reasoned that Joseph would hate them and pay them back for all they had done. But Joseph said, "Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Genesis 50:20). Whatever God wants He is able to bring about. He will utilize whatever power is essential to achieve His purpose. What a difference it can make if we look at our reverses through the eye of faith rather than through the eyes of doubt.

Paul's lesson— Paul wrote from prison to the Philippians,

“I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel” (Philippians 1:12). The word for “advance” is a military term. It was used to describe a corps of trained and adept wood-choppers who always preceded the Roman army on their jungle forays. So powerful were they that they could clear a road almost as fast as the infantry could march. Paul looked at his persecution and beatings, not as an end in themselves, but as a divine wood-chopping crew cleaving the way for him to go to Rome. He had long wanted to go and God wanted him to go. But God sent him at the expense of the Roman government and under the protection of a Roman centurion. All of these were clearing the way for his advance of the gospel.

I am confident that you who read this, and who love Jesus, can look back upon your lives, and see the footprints of God in many events. At the time they seemed to be hardships, problems and trials. That was because you were close to them. Now as you glance back at them over your shoulder you can behold the touch of God’s hand in it all. And you can be grateful and thankful that He who could see the future as if it were the present, was guiding, directing, leading you in the way He would have you go. No wonder we love Him. Praise His holy name!

Miracle of Healing

Christian Standard (August 21, 1983): 4

Christian Standard

God is a great conservator. He is not a waster of energy. He never uses a bit more power than is essential in the accomplishment of His purpose. He is not like Henry Ford who put much more power under the hood than was necessary to propel the vehicle. When God can accomplish His purpose through the use of nature He does so. If providential power is required the gears are shifted to it, and if supernatural demonstrations are required they are relied upon. Whatever is needed is available unto Him who is designated the Almighty, a translation of *pantokrator*, to have or hold all strength. He is omnipotent, all powerful. Power originates with Him as its source.

There is no distinct word for miracle in the New Covenant Scriptures. It is a translation of *dunamis*, the word for power or inherent ability. It is not an act or work contrary to nature. To define it thus would have God acting contrary to himself since He controls the natural. It is simply rising to a greater height of power, as a plane rises from 30,000 to 35,000 feet in order to take advantage of a favorable tailwind. It is interesting that the term aerodynamics is applied to the operation of a machine in the air. The destination or goal remains the same regardless of the flight level. And so it is with the mighty works of Jesus.

The poor woman who had suffered from an excessive

menstrual flow for twelve years, spent her whole living upon physicians, but could not find one who could cure her disease (Mark 5:24-34). Mark records that she gradually grew worse. She became convinced that if she touched the hem of Jesus' garment she would be made well. This might have been the result of a superstitious reverence for the hem of the garment which God had ordained to be of a different color so they should remember all the commands of the Lord to do them. It is easy to get confused about divinely-given symbols.

We probably should not be too critical of the intents of the heart of those simple people who come to Jesus, seeing that they led them to the right one. She touched Him. And she felt that the flow of blood ceased immediately. Jesus asked, "Who was it that touched me?" Peter replied, "The crowd is all around You, pressing upon You, and You ask who touched You?"

Jesus knew the difference between the casual touch and the touch of faith. He knew that to touch with the hands was one thing, but to touch with the heart was a wholly different matter. He said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone forth from me." That is amazing, encouraging, up-lifting. It indicates that the resources of power in Jesus can be tapped in time of need. And the power that is required, flows forth from him. Perhaps we ought to change the popular song from "He Touched Me" to "I Touched Him."

When the woman realized that she could not remain hidden from the merciful gaze of this one who had restored her to wholeness, she came shaking and trembling and fell down before Him. Sobbing out what had happened to all who gathered around, she told how, at her touch, she was immediately healed. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

Of course, being caught up in the toils of philosophy we have long since put everything in a bin marked cause and effect.

We know that for every effect there must be a cause and the cause must be adequate enough to produce the effect. We would probably refer to her faith as the motivating cause and to the power of Jesus as the activating cause. But coming down from the hills of philosophy to the plains where most of us have grown up and are still afraid to leave, I find myself rejoicing at the result.

I cannot get the poor invalid out of my mind. Physically afflicted, ceremonially unclean, debarred from social contact, all she could do was await the crimson stream flowing from her body until she became so dehydrated that death was her lot. There was no physician, no clinic, no hospital to which she could turn. All of her money had been spent on doctors. There was none left. There remained only one more “chance.” The hem of a garment. No one knows how many times she touched it mentally before she touched it in reality. But finally she “came up behind Him” and reached out and touched it. And she knew. She knew at once. I’ve read many accounts of the mighty works of Jesus, but I confess that this one moves me to the depths.

Differing means— Yet I realize that what happened was exactly what the physicians were trying to achieve by the natural means available unto them. Although they did not have the laboratories and research centers that are available unto us today, they no doubt tried. Prescriptions, poultices, pills. They tried them all, hoping they would find just the right one, the key to the malady, the cure for every symptom of her condition.

But Jesus did not need to experiment. He is the Creator of the body. He is the Lord of life and of death. He knows! Cutting through all of the probing and prying, all of the tests and tactics, Jesus instantaneously halted the flow of blood, and life began to run into the veins instead of out of them. The result was not so marvelous. Everyone was trying to achieve it. It was the method of bringing it about which was so intriguing. It cut across everything else and went directly to the goal of restored health.

It did not discard, ridicule, or refuse the natural. It simply transcended it. It went above it and over it.

What amazing power went forth from Him that day. I write this in the last two decades of the twentieth century. All around me are great centers of discovery. Almost every week some new technique for dealing with disease is announced. In our city are two great medical universities. Hospitals are all over the city and the surrounding area. Yet, all of these are limited to the purely natural. All they can do is to bring the whole realm of nature into such relationship to the life of the patient that he will recover.

Occasionally “divine healers” come through the area with their bombast and circus showmanship. They skim off the money as did the physicians of old but, when they leave, the hospitals are just as filled as they were before. Some of the patients are those whom they healed. Just as many became ill, just as many walk through the dark valley of the shadows. They do not know, and the people do not realize that in the days when the New Covenant was being written there were no “divine healers.” The very expression has been coined to denote a modern phenomenon which has arisen because of man’s ignorance of the power of God. The nearest thing to them in the book of Acts were the “vagabond Jews who traveled around claiming to exorcise evil spirits.”

To the Corinthians Christ as called “the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:24). In a tiny babe, the power of God came down and lived among us in a human tent. Before His earthly life was rudely snatched from Him on the cross, we were permitted to see that power in its demonstration. It was a glorious and beautiful thing. Hope sprung up in the breasts of those who had known only despair. And we can have and know and feel that power. Christ in you is the power in you, the wisdom in you, the righteousness in you. Jesus did not come only for the age in which He lived on earth until He was murdered. His

resurrection proved that He was the man for all ages.

I am a natural man. I must eat, sleep, and exercise. I must take my temperature. I must check my blood pressure. I grow tired. I become weary. But within me, as an earthen vessel, is the power of God, not latent, not depressed. What a grand thing it is to realize that Christ in us is the hope of glory.

While I exercise my own ability, the ability of God is not limited. And how blessed it is to realize that faith does not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God. *The power of God!* Think about that. Roll it over your tongue. Let your heart palpitate to its beat. Your faith does not rest in the wisdom of God. It is grounded in the power of our God!

No Credibility Gap

Christian Standard (August 28 , 1983): 10

Christian Standard

The “Good News” is the announcement of historical facts related to a person. That person was unique above all others. He came from Heaven, having pre-existed as the Logos, and entered the life of flesh as a baby. It was the design of Heaven that we be ransomed and saved from sin by His death. The condition for our justification was faith in Him as the Son of God. This constitutes the greatest truth ever to challenge the minds of men and it was attested by those who knew Him. Faith is the belief of testimony. Where there is . no testimony, there is no faith. Where testimony begins, faith begins. Where testimony ends, faith ends.

All testimony must be made credible in order to be accepted, or believed, by rational minds. “Credible” simply means believable. It refers to that which is deemed worthy of confidence as to its correctness and truth. One cannot refrain from believing what appears true to him, nor can he believe what does not. It is for this reason that the testimony of more than one person as to an act or fact is required in order to convict a person. It is the minds of the jurors which reach the conviction although we generally speak of the person on trial as being convicted and even call him a convict. “In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” The offsetting of the testimony of one man by that of another is not sufficient.

There are two kinds of persons who seek to address us through the medium of words. One is human, the other divine. Human testimony must be established by natural means. Divine testimony must be established by supernatural means. One who proposes to bring a message from Heaven or to act as a divine mouthpiece must be prepared to perform acts beyond the limit of human capabilities to validate his claims. Most of those who today proclaim themselves as God's prophets prove the fallacy of their claims by their moral, ethical, or functional breakdowns. It should be remembered that no number of followers can validate one as a direct spokesman for God. All such are natural and the natural cannot make the supernatural credible.

This immediately relegates many so-called "miracle workers" to their proper sphere. It is useless to point to the vast numbers who follow them as a proof of the truth of their claims. To engage in that kind of tactic is only to show how many people have been deceived. It is not the performance of something that is mind-boggling or spectacular that is essential, for mystics and magicians through the ages have been able to do things of that nature. What is needed is something that no human power can do, and that will attest to the fact that God is working in, through, and by the subject, directly and unequivocally.

Confirmed by God— The writer to the Hebrew Christians begins his letter by reminding them that God had spoken in past ages to their fathers. He had done this at various times and in various ways through the prophets. But then he says that, "In these days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Hebrews 1:2, *Revised Standard Version*). The revelation of God through His Son, was superior to His revelation to the prophets, just as the incarnation is superior to the previous information given about it. Accordingly chapter 2 begins by enjoining us to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, that we may escape the penalty of neglect.

Our salvation does not depend upon the law and the

prophets. It is not conditioned upon what angels spoke. It first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was made sure to us by those who heard Him. The Word then adds, "God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will." These men were on a divine mission. They had been divinely chosen, authorized and sent forth. Everything they needed to establish their credentials was available to them instantaneously and positively. They did not need to search their pockets for an identification card or ransack their billfolds for a Social Security registration.

Four words— It would not do for someone who was acting in confirmation of the Lord to become so befuddled he forgot his mission, or could not prove that he was an envoy or emissary of the Son of God. So God reinforced their claims with the four things mentioned. Sign is from *semeion*. It has to do with the *design* of the works. Thus Jesus did many more signs than are recorded but those which were selected and written are sufficient to make any honest person believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God (John 20:30, 31). The word *semeion* means a token, and the sign was the token of the supernatural power which was possessed by those sent forth from God. The word token is from the same root as our word "teach."

"Wonders" has to do with the *effect* upon the beholder. It is from *teras*. And, because the prime purpose is never just to startle or arouse curiosity, this being a result and not the object, it does not appear alone. Generally it is found in conjunction with signs, the design and effect being blended. Peter declared on Pentecost that Jesus was a man "approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." We learn from this the purpose, the origin, and the arena for the mighty acts. They were done for attestation, their performance was from God, and the field was the world.

Miracles have to do with the *nature* of the act. We have already learned “miracle” is generally a translation of the term for inherent power. W. E. Vine defines miracles as “works of a supernatural origin and character; such as could not be produced by natural agents and means.” Sometimes they shortened the time which nature required to do the same thing. This was true of the first one performed by Jesus, the turning of water into wine. Nature makes all wine from water drawn from the soil and deposited in the grapes. Winemaking requires the intervention of men and the fermentation process. But Jesus did instantaneously what it takes months to accomplish by natural means. He suspended the process.

Some miracles were a true measure of authority over the power of the evil one. This was true in the case of the woman who was doubled over and could not straighten up. Jesus asked, “Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?” (Luke 13:16). In every test Jesus came off triumphant. He could not have done less and been who He claimed to be. This is demonstrated in the case of the raising from death of Jairus’ daughter, the widow’s son, and Lazarus. He had the power over death which had the power over everyone else.

But God also bore them witness with gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will. The word here is not “charisma,” a gift of grace. It is *merismos*. And it means “a dividing.” It is used for partition or distribution. The only other time it was utilized by the Spirit is in Hebrews 4:12. Here it simply means that one of the methods of attesting to the veracity and integrity of the messengers was by the distribution and impartation of the Holy Spirit. This had to be according to the divine will and was undeniable proof that God was with them. The Spirit was divided and made available according to God’s plan and purpose. Signs were supernatural proof of the divine nature, wonders were supernatural proof of divine agency;

miracles were proof of divine authority; and the gifts were proof of the divine control and order.

No wonder we are cautioned to give the more earnest heed to what we have heard from Jesus and about Him. His superiority to angels is amply demonstrated. If what they spoke brought such a penalty for disregarding it, how can we possibly escape if we neglect such a salvation which began by a proclamation of the very Son himself? His credibility was established in the only way it could be, by means beyond the natural. He was proven to be the Son of God with power. This proof was manifested by demonstrations of power. What a thrill, what a blessing, it is to serve one who can rule over everything in this life that threatens us.

Energy at Work

Christian Standard (September 4, 1983): 11

Christian Standard

The letter to the Ephesians has been called many beautiful things. By one it was designated “the crown jewel in the diadem of Scripture.” Another has referred to it as “the Mount Everest of the sacred writings.” Still another has called it “the book of prayers.” It is true that some of the loveliest prayers of Paul are recorded in it. I want to share with you a petition to the Father found in chapter one. In verse 15 he commends their faith and love. Hope is referred to in verse 18. Thus, the three abiding virtues, those prime ingredients to the Christian way, were present with them. And these triggered Paul into ceaselessly giving thanks for them, and remembering them in his prayers.

Those prayers included three things. He prayed that, with their inner eyes illumined or enlightened, they might experience the hope to which they had been called; they might come to know the riches of their glorious inheritance; and that they might know the immeasurable greatness of His power in us who believe.

I have heard many public prayers. Some have moved me until I wept. But I have never heard one uttered like this one. As I read it, meditate upon it, and let its rivulets irrigate my soul, I am tempted to cast myself down before Him, and cry out, “Lord, teach me to pray.” I doubt that I have ever read a more profound prayer than this. It is almost too sacred to try and

analyze. Let us look at it and tremble in its presence.

The *hope* to which He has called us. This is one of the three pillars of our life in Jesus. Only the Christian can possess it. Those who are divorced from Jesus are separated from this hope (Ephesians 2:12). It is the ground for optimism. Change one letter and it becomes “cope” and without it one cannot cope with life and its sufferings. It is present in life and present in death. Robert Bridges said, “I live on hope, and that I think do all who come into this world.” Playwright Adele Shreve wrote, “Hope is life, and life is hope.”

The riches of His glorious *inheritance*. Our inheritance is introduced in Ephesians 1:14. There we learn that we do not have possession of it except in contemplation. But the Holy Spirit is given us as a guarantee that we shall receive it. That is one of at least nine reasons I have found why the Spirit has been given to us. And it is but another proof that He belongs only to those who are born again, for none others are heirs of God or joint-heirs with Christ. Note the use of the terms “riches” and “glorious” in conjunction with our inheritance. The first deals with quantity, the second with quality.

The immeasurable greatness of His *power*. Man can measure the velocity of the wind. He can determine the force of an earthquake, or the upthrust of a volcano. But he is helpless in trying to determine the greatness of the inner power. Once in a while he sees a manifestation of it, but such demonstrations are not generally physical. They relate to causes above, beyond, and outside the realm of the senses. And the power is given to the believer. It is union with Christ which produces it. The skeptic, the agnostic, the atheist, the unbeliever, deny themselves this tremendous power. They can never become God’s living nuclear bombs.

In addition to the many other blessings accruing to the believer, this alone should be sufficient to cause every person

possessed of rational powers to believe. Weakness or frailty of the body have nothing to do with it. One can be a pygmy by the world's standards and a giant in God's sight. It is comforting to know that God furnishes the power to do whatever He wants done. And when we come into Christ the power comes into us. We make the connection by faith. This is the switch which, when thrown, activates the flow of power to us, in us, and through us.

God's power at work— There are three of the Greek words for power used in Ephesians 1:19. The word rendered "power" is *dunamis*. It is the inherent power of God. It is creative and dynamic. And it functions in us according to the working of His great might. "Working" is from *energeia*. The Greek word indicates the English term which is derived from it. "Might" is from *ischus*, strength. Can you believe that? How then can we become discouraged, depressed, or even diffident about life? Why should we think of any task He assigns as too great for us?

It is important to notice that it is not us working in Christ that fulfills God's purpose, but Christ working in us. We become the tools for the divine hand, the utensils, the medium for the message. In 1:19 it is "according to the working of his great might." In 3:7 God's gift of grace was given "by the working of his power." In 3:20 it is "to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think." Before we can do we have to think. Action is preceded by thought. But He transcends thought. He acts beyond our ability to plan or purpose.

Every child of God who is committed to His cause, is a seething, fermenting, boiling vessel within. He is one of God's geysers, a volcano of pent-up energy. At a notice from the Master, he is ready to break forth. I am thinking now of a precious sister in Christ who lost her husband by a sudden heart attack a couple of years ago. Instead of folding her hands and resigning herself to her fate, she began to cultivate the acquaintance of other widows in the area. She opened her home

to them, they came for luncheon, remained to study the Bible, and the entire community has been transformed. There is a sense of trust and dependency that was never there before. It stems from “the power at work within.”

Jeremiah was forbidden to speak the message of God. He resisted doing so until the word became “a fire in his bones.” He said he was weary from holding in. His life was threatened. He was subjected to all kinds of hardship and suffering. Still he kept on. He wrestled with the great problem of why the way of the wicked prospered, and why those who were treacherous thrived. He saw the prophet and priest “ply their trade in the law without knowledge.” But never again was he tempted to keep quiet. The Word of God within was like a whirling tempest.

The divine energy works according to His great might. This was accomplished by the demonstration of the mightiest act in the history of this old world, the raising of Jesus from the dead and His elevation to the right hand of God. It was God’s might which divided the Red Sea, and cut off the waters of the Jordan coming down from the north. It was that might which stopped the crushing jaws of the lions and made them fawn like tame kittens when Daniel was cast into their den. It was the same might which held back the consuming flames of the fiery furnace so effectively that not even the smell of fire could be detected on the clothing of the Hebrews. All of this was tremendous. But it paled into insignificance when compared to the awakening of the crucified Christ, whose lifeless body had been deposited in the dark and cheerless tomb.

The question “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” has dried away thousands of tears, and choked back the sobs from countless ones whose bent frames and shaking shoulders bow beneath the weight of their grief. Yet the power which produced the raising from the dead of Jesus, dwells in me. It is my heritage from the Lord. It is my daily source of motivation. It is a divine gift to “us who believe.” And it is ours because we

have ceased to trust in our own might— personal, physical, psychological, political. We do not seek to manage or manipulate men. We only persuade them. We allow room for the power of God to work through our eyes, our tongues, our hands, our feet.

There is another prayer and another reference to His might in the Ephesian letter. It is found in the conclusion of chapter three. Verse 16 reads, “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man.” Once more riches is joined to glory. Although we are limited by the flesh and cannot define glory fully in this life, we do know what riches is, although it is a relative term. And the wedding of riches to glory gives us the sublime hope that whatever glory is, and however we share in it, it will not be sparsely meted out.

The strength and the might are here connected with the Spirit. He is the agent by whom we receive them. They are His ministration unto us. They are part and parcel of the many-splendored thing that glory provides and injects into our inner man. Who can ever comprehend a tithe of what the Spirit does for us? Faith introduces us to Him and He takes over. Before our wondrous gaze unfolds one dramatic blessing after another. None is more important than the might which enables us to overcome every weakness, every weapon, every warring force against us.

The letter to the Ephesians had to be written. Someone has pointed out that it consists of two parts. There are three chapters in each. The first deals with the church in formation. The second deals with information for the church. The first part is prophetic. The second is pragmatic. And almost in the exact middle stands the glorious assurance of power from on high, power to be appropriated by the inner man. That power reaches back to grasp the promises, and enables us to hold the promises in our grasp.

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Integrity

by W. Carl Ketcherside

Journals

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AN UNPOPULAR TRUTH

Integrity 8 (January-February 1976): 122-23

Integrity

I have been around long enough to learn that one does not gain in popularity by speaking critically of the historical religious group with which he is affiliated. There is always an “open season” upon others and anyone can take the field and blast away at them as long as his verbal ammunition holds out and he can keep his powder dry. But it isn’t “cricket,” as our British brethren would put it, to take public aim at “our brethren,” and let folks in general know there is anything out of line with us.

You can talk about brethren in private as much as you like and lambaste them in secret conclaves, so long as it doesn’t get out. In fact, the great American pastime in most gatherings is talking about the brethren— who are not there! But the unpardonable sin in many quarters is to reveal our shortcomings openly and let “the outside world get hold of it!” I will probably get in hot water for some of the things I shall say, but I have been scalded by professionals, so I am going to risk expressing a few honest convictions I hold. You need not concur with them for me to love you and I’ll not become uptight if you disagree. It just seems as if someone ought to say a few things out loud, and, like Jeremiah, I am weary from holding in!

“Denomination” . . .

As a starter, let me say that the Church of Christ, as it exists today, is a denomination in the fairest sense of that word. I mean the non-instrumental “Church of Christ” which is fragmented into about two dozen parties. Of course I know that “denomination” is a term we apply to others. It is a derogatory expression, a derisive expletive, which we use to characterize heretics and apostates, because we are as ignorant of the meaning of those two words as we are of the meaning of denomination. Any group which denominates itself is a denomination. The word comes from the Latin *denominare*, to name, to designate by a specific name, to give a distinctive title.

The term “Church of Christ” is as much a name for a specific group as are the terms Baptist Church or Methodist Church. A religious group does not become a denomination by its particular doctrines. The Baptists are not a denomination because of the practice of immersion. The Reformed Presbyterians are not a denomination because of their rigid refusal to employ instrumental music in their corporate praise to God. It makes no difference whether the words used as an appellation are found in the scriptures or derived from some other source, any segment of believers in Christ which brands itself to distinguish its adherents is a denomination for the simple reason that it has denominated itself. Dressing a practice in the livery of heaven does not make it right.

The community of reconciled ones has no official title. It has no name which can be recorded in the files of the United States Census Bureau. That community of the redeemed is designated by a great many words in the apostolic writings but every one of them is a common noun, serving as a description or a relationship. There is only one body of the called saints and it needs no title with which to differentiate it from any other. There is no other in its category. The “church” is not a human organization but a divine organism. It is not an earthly concoction but a heavenly creation. There is only one church, there never was but one, and there never will be another. The

body of Christ embraces every saved person on this earth, and some of them are squatting behind some strange signboards. God does not judge men by what other men have written on signboards, by what the Spirit has written on “the fleshly tables of the heart.”

For a long time I did not know this and that accounts for the tract I wrote in Red Cloud, Nebraska years ago, under the heading, “Whose Name Shall the Bride Wear?” It had long been one of my favorite protracted meeting themes, and I thought it was pretty hot stuff. So did the brethren in the party with which I was allied at the time. They circulated fifty-thousand copies of it. I wish I had them back. I found out that “Church of Christ” is not the name of the bride at all. Christ was not the second name of Jesus, but his office or function. He was Jesus *the* Christ, or Messiah. A bride does not wear the name of her husband’s office or function. The wife of Mr. Brown, the carpenter, is not called Mrs. Carpenter. The wife of Mr. Smith, the painter, is not called Mrs. Painter.

Besides that, the wedding has not yet taken place as anyone can see by reading Revelation 19:7-9. I have an invitation and I intend to be there. I have been called. But even after the wedding the bride will not be called “Church of Christ.” On the basis of our reasoning she would have to be called Mrs. Jesus. What would you think of a signboard which read “Mrs. Jesus Meets Here for Worship-Romans 16:16”? Even our brethren who use the argument they have cooked up for debate know better. They talk about the name of the bride and then insist upon using the small “c” for church, so they will not appear “denominational.” Whoever heard of a person spelling her name as a common noun is spelled? We do not write about “mrs. brown” or “mrs. smith.” It is easier to admit there is no divinely-given name for the called-out ones and quit trying to drum up titles which only reveal that “our slip is showing.”

THE BIG MISTAKE

Integrity 10 (April 1976): 148-49

Integrity

In the old days parents always knew when spring had arrived without looking at the Farmer's Almanac. They could tell by the muddy spot on one trouser knee and by the roughened, skin-cracked knuckle on the index finger of the right hand of their schoolboy sons. Boys had a built-in thermostat which sensed that the equinox was approaching and demonstrated it by starting marble games all over the place. In such encounters it was customary to try and unnerve an opponent when he was making a crucial shot and there were several approved methods of shattering his aplomb. One was to draw a straight line and a circle in the dirt between his taw and the ring while shouting, "Here's the river and here's the lake—and here's where you made your big mistake."

Most of the readers of this journal no longer play marbles. For one thing they can't bend down that far, and if they did someone would have to lift them up. But you don't have to play with "aggies, cat's eyes and steelies" to make a big mistake. I want to point out the biggest one made by the third and fourth generation heirs of the restoration movement launched by Barton Warren Stone, Thomas Campbell, and other genial and erudite Presbyterians.

I happen to be within the tradition of that movement which had such a noble aim and such worthy originators, so

what I say is not intended to be carping criticism, but a gentle reminder that we jumped the track a few decades back and have been mired down in the mud along the right-of-way, huffing and puffing and getting nowhere. One does not show good judgment by taking an axe and smashing the cradle in which he was rocked. What happened to us is not unique. It occurs in every movement to restore the primitive order of things. And the fault does not lie in the dream but in the dreamers, who are men of flesh, and act like it.

The time comes when those involved begin to equate the movement with the community of believers which Jesus planted. In their minds the movement becomes “the Lord’s church,” and no one outside the movement is considered to be in Christ. The movement crystallizes around the discoveries to date and comes to a screeching halt. It ceases to move and changes into a monument. A movement makes progress. It creates new and dynamic leadership attuned to the pulsebeat of its own era. A monument celebrates the victories of the past. It honors the heroes of yesterday. Men go to a monument, but they are caught up in a movement.

It was never the intention of those who originated our “project to unite the Christians in all of the sects,” to form another sect under another title, to confuse the minds of simple people. Alexander Campbell declared that “the first piece written on the subject of the great position appeared from the pen of Thomas Campbell, Senior, in the year 1809.” He said, “The piece alluded to was styled The Declaration and Address of the Christian association of Washington, Pennsylvania.”

The fourth resolution in that *Declaration and Address* specifically says, “That this Society by no means considers itself a Church, nor does at all assume to itself the powers of such a society; nor do its members, as such, consider themselves as standing connected in that relation; nor as at all associated for the peculiar purposes of Church association; but merely as

voluntary advocates for Church reformation.”

What a change hath been wrought! Not only do those who hail the *Declaration and Address* as launching the restoration movement, consider themselves as constituting a Church, but they consider themselves as comprising the only church. They are now the one specific organization and institution ordained by Jesus upon the confession made by Simon Peter, with Jesus as their head. They are now the one holy, catholic and apostolic church of God upon earth, a claim made by the Roman Church also. Our brethren “consider themselves as standing connected in the relation” of Church, although they have become disconnected over more things than you “can shake a stick at,” as the old-timers used to say. We have not only turned the restoration movement into a church, but we have turned it into a bevy of churches, each one affirming to high heaven that it is the one our Lord ordained, to the utter exclusion of all other brethren! “You’ve come a long way, baby!”

Our only concept of unity now is best described as “the snake-frog recipe.” If others who love Jesus will sit still and not get jumpy, and let us swallow them we will be one. There is no way to be one outside of us, and those who become one with us must abandon any opinion which differs with ours, and not only forsake it, but come down the aisle and hold the preacher’s hand and acknowledge it was a sin to ever think it. This is what happens when men lose sight of their goals and settle for something less— a lot less. I think I liked it better when we “did not assume the powers of such a society” as a church, and could just be a Christian association in this frightened, ripped-off, sect-ridden world!

ABOUT HERETICS

Integrity 1 (June 1976): 3, 4

Integrity

All religious persecution is the same in the heart of the perpetrator. Only the methods change as mankind becomes more civilized. In one century the victims are tied to the stake, in another they are lied about in papers. The hangman's platform has surrendered to the harangue-man's pulpit, and since one man's apostasy is often another man's apostleship, we are frequently treated to a verbal barrage rage of accusations, innuendo and censure directed both ways and "always in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the glory of the Father," just as Torquemada carried on The Inquisition!

All legalistic systems are doomed to fragment into fighting factions. There is no escape. When men insist upon exercising their freedom to make their interpretation of revelation the authorized one while denying the liberty to all others: they will split wide open every time someone learns a truth not previously discovered or discerned. Legalistic systems constantly breed "new messiahs" raised up to "save the brotherhood from digression" while gratifying the monumental ego of such modern saviors. Their chief stock in trade is the gall essential to thrusting themselves into situations which are not their concern, and of blowing issues up into gigantic proportions which, if left alone, would wither and die on the vine. All factionalists have to produce a red-hot issue, and if one gets a little cold they must reheat it or grab another out of the fire and wave it around!

There is one great difference between the persecution of yesterday and that of the present. The stem defenders of the status quo in the yesteryear did not mess around with trivia. Their “heretics” were not dabblers in froth and fiddle-faddle. They were not blowing soap bubbles. They were involved in subjects like free will, foreordination, predestination, the nature of Godhood and sacramentalism. Being a heretic in those days was not a job for an amateur or a theological piddler. You had to really be up on what everyone else was down on! It required a smart man to be a heretic. There was no use of anyone else applying.

Heresy has been cheapened in our day by over-production. Almost everyone can be a heretic now and almost everyone is in the eyes of someone else. If you were to pool the attitudes of all the various partisans and accept their judgment as valid, there would not be a single follower of Jesus left on earth— only heretics and apostates! A man can become a heretic now by taking either side of such world-shaking issues as to whether or not a college girl can pray in a “rap session” where there are male collegians present. There is a world of difference between an Ultramontanist and a “one-cupper” or between one who supported Monophysitism and one who sends a contribution to the Highland congregation in Abilene, Texas, to help pay the tariff on a radio and television program. Heretics are no longer big-name folks at all! They are as common as an old shoe.

In fact, the best way to become a heretic in one easy lesson is simply to unite with one of the two dozen groups wearing the denomination “Church of Christ.” This will automatically make you an “apostate” to the other twenty-three segments. Even if you are quite ignorant of what the group with which you became identified “believes and teaches,” the fact that you “took your stand” with them places you on the “black list” of the others and guarantees you will not be called on to publicly petition the Father of mercy if you attend their meetings. There are exceptions, of course, but you probably should not count on

being one of them! You'll have enough disappointments as it is.

There is only one way to stop this consummate foolishness. It was recommended to Pharaoh by the God of Israel, but was conveyed through Moses, whom Pharaoh regarded as a heretic. *Let my people go!* The people of God belong to God. They are not pawns of preachers, nor pamperers of presbyters! They are not to be inhibited by institutions nor frightened by factions! It is time to acknowledge openly and frankly that we are not under law but under grace! The love letters of the new covenant scriptures are not a written code. Our pattern is a person. It is not a partisan practice palmed off as the will of God. God's people do not need to be denounced from the pulpit but delivered from it. They need to be freed and not frightened, saved and not scared!

It is time to encourage brethren to think, not to punish them for doing so. Let mental torture and political reprisal be relegated to the Dark Ages and not practiced in the present day by those who profess to be followers of the Man of Nazareth. If this form of harassment must be perpetuated let it be characteristic of atheistic communism and not of the disciples of Him who lived and died to make us free. Shall we continue to defend a system which can only divide us out of existence as it has divided us out of influence in many places?

Shall we continue to prate about a "pattern theology" when it has ripped us into shreds, and each man quotes "book, chapter and verse" to sustain a different pattern? The pattern of the scriptures is universally to point to Jesus. He is the author and finisher of the faith! And His design is not to make great lawyers but grand lovers! Lord, teach us to love!

THINKING OUT LOUD

Integrity 2 (July-August 1976): 26, 27

Integrity

1. If you are right about Jesus you can be wrong about a lot of other things and still be saved; if you are wrong about Jesus you can be right about everything else and still be lost.

2. Anyone who loves his opinions more than he does his brethren will defend his opinions and destroy his brethren.

3. You can measure the shallowness of a man's faith by the littleness of the issues which cause him to separate from the saints.

4. We are called upon to receive one another as God received us. We have no more right to make a man's ignorance a test of our reception of him than God made our ignorance a test of His reception of us.

5. No person will be saved because he is right on everything. We will only be saved because we are in the right person with everything.

6. Only a man who is perfect in his thinking has the right to make another man's imperfection in thinking a test of fellowship.

7. It is silly to ignore all that we hold in common in Christ to separate from one another over the few things upon which we

disagree. A family should not dissolve relationship over the pattern of wallpaper in the bathroom.

8. Please remember that opinions are our brainchildren and we love them like we do our physical children, but our neighbors may not share our love for either. Both should be kept at home for the peace of the church and the neighborhood.

9. It is never right to be wrong and it is never wrong to be right, but it is wrong to assume that everyone must be right on everything to be saved. Mercy is not required where one is right about everything, and one who thinks that it is, thereby demonstrates he is wrong about one thing at least, and deserves no mercy when measured by his own criterion.

10. Every group which lasts more than one generation has a tradition and the succeeding generations harden that tradition and make it more inflexible and unyielding. Men may depart from the word and be forgiven, but he who attacks a tradition hath never forgiveness, neither in this generation nor in the one to come!

11. In many cases in the brotherhood it appears there are more “hoods” than there are “brothers.” When the partisan “Mafia” puts the finger on someone and lets a “contract” on him he will be gunned down if he goes to the remotest corner of the earth. Who needs enemies when he has brethren such as flourish in a lot of locations?

12. Most of the saints exist in a congregation merely to pay and pray. Frequently they pray for what they do not expect and pay for what they do not want. But if they quit praying they think God will not like it, and if they quit paying they know the elders will not like it. In a lot of congregations giving has come to be “taxation without representation.” You can be told how much you ought to give but you cannot tell how it ought to be spent.

13. Women who are not allowed to attend “business

meetings” ought to “pay attention to their own business” and not turn their finances over to men to dispose of without their consultation or consent. God’s word no more condemns women attending business meetings than it authorizes men to hold them. But we have always operated on the basis that if you cannot find a pattern, make one! It is a shame to extort money from a certain class of saints by threatening them with hell if they do not turn it over to you, and then threaten them with hell again if they publicly protest against those to whom they turn their money over. We need to do a little overturning and not so much turning over!

14. I can tell a sister how she can attend a business meeting. Let her casually remark that she has twenty-five thousand dollars from the estate of her late husband which she wants to give to the congregation but she is not going to present it except in a business meeting! She will be invited to the next one and will be visited by more deacons in the intervening time than she has ever seen in her lifetime.

15. A congregation which lays down and plays dead when the preacher snaps his fingers is probably not playing! A lot of preachers are like alarm clocks—they sound off while you are asleep!

16. So long as we continue as we have in the past we will never know whether Christianity will work or not!

17. If you do not like the kind of material featured above, or if it gets your dander up, please skip it, and do not read it. There’s no use getting uptight, when you can “hang loose and let Jesus put it all together!” Treat what I have said like a Sunday sermon— and you’ll soon forget it!

“BROTHER YOUNG IS A BAPTIST”

Integrity 6 (December 1976): 87, 88

Integrity

In January, 1844, John Young addressed a brief letter of resignation to “The Faculty and Trustees of Bethany College.” He had been invited by Alexander Campbell to come and teach in the preparatory school of the college where he had apparently performed well. Campbell printed his note of resignation in the *Millennial Harbinger* and subjoined a note to it, in which he said:

Brother Young . . . has been induced, by the continual solicitations of the Baptist Church in the city of Trenton, New Jersey, to return to that state and to resume his labors in that community. In the selection of our professors and teachers we have not been at all exclusive. Bro. Young is a Baptist minister, from London, of liberal views, and very popular talents as a speaker. He has often during his stay here, spoken in the church at Bethany with much acceptance: and he will carry with him the Christian regards and the prayers of the church for his usefulness and prosperity. We have also a Presbyterian professor in the department of the languages, very highly esteemed for his virtues and for the faithful discharge of his professional duties. We are always pleased to cultivate the most intimate friendship with all good and useful men, of all denominations, reputable for their intelligence and piety, and would be glad to be frequently visited at the College

hall by respectable persons of all Protestant denominations.

I have not read anything else in such brief compass, which brings into such sharp focus the sectarian attitude which has gradually enveloped us as a people. Can you imagine such a letter being printed in the *Gospel Advocate* or *Firm Foundation* over the signature of the president of either Harding College or David Lipscomb College? A few years ago a furor was created when a respected evangelist from Memphis called upon a Baptist preacher to lead in prayer at a “big meeting.” The roof almost fell in upon him. Even more recently there was a big hullabaloo over having a “Christian Church preacher” pray to the Father at the annual convention known as the Abilene Christian College Lectureship.

Our own quaint and peculiar theological distillate which can hardly be described as other than “Church of Christism” has led us to the place where we are not so much zealous as we are Zealots. Many of those in our number do not think there are any “good and useful men” in the denominations. We are not pleased to “cultivate the most intimate friendship” with those outside of our ranks, and we seldom think of them as “reputable for intelligence and piety.” We are now more exclusive and frequently more bitter and anti-social than those whom we oppose. In most communities our brethren are tagged as the only people who will not show any open concern for those outside their own ranks.

The Egress of Corruption . . .

Like Alexander Campbell, I am opposed to all sectarianism, regardless of type, brand or kind. He wrote in *The Christian System*, “All strifes, contentions, parties and sects grow out of corruption. Sects are the egress of corruptions.” I think that any honest thinker will admit this is correct. Sects are a

work of the flesh and not a fruit of the Spirit. So, while I am opposed to sects, even more important, I am opposed to the party spirit out of which all sects spring and in which they “live and move and have their being.”

I am opposed to our own sectarianism as well as that of others, and because I believe the restoration ideal, properly understood, is valid, I intend to take it into any gathering in which I am invited or in which men indicate a willingness to hear me. I do not think we have cornered the market on goodness and usefulness. I do not believe we are the sole exemplars of intelligence and piety.

I have been set free from fear and I no longer fear what men will do unto me. So I propose to cross over borders and go behind lines with the message of “peace on earth to men of goodwill.” This was the message with which the heavenly choir announced His coming to share with us in the flesh, and it is the message now which needs to be announced that all who love Him may share with Him in the Spirit. I shall recognize truth wherever I find it, and use it as a foundation upon which to stand with the one who holds it, while sharing other truth. I will seek to be true to Him while trusting in His marvelous grace which has struck the shackles from my soul. His revealed word is my lamp and there is no darkness where it shines!

THE SCATTERED SHEEP

Integrity 8 (March 1977): 119-20

Integrity

A great many good brethren in our day are not only spiritually illiterate but are also uninformed as to the plea which gave us historical entry into the arena where sincere men were struggling for a solution to the perplexing problem of schism among those who professed faith in Jesus as Lord. I do not say this accusingly, but rather as explanatory of the position in which we find ourselves. We have painted ourselves into a corner by our attitude, and are spending our time talking to ourselves about other people instead of talking to other people about the glory of the Lord.

The first and foremost symptom of the sectarian spirit is an attitude of exclusivism. We build walls to protect our past discoveries and to keep others out, but we forget that it is those inside the walls who are in prison and not those outside. The factional spirit creates a party to defend some truth, or something that is equated as truth, and in its zeal for the position which gives it existence, it neglects to embrace a proper regard for all truth, or for truth as a universal principle. Every legalistic sect comes to think of itself as the one holy, apostolic and catholic church of God upon earth. It considers that it has discovered the key to understanding and all outside of its environs are heathens and publicans.

The fact is that, in our current state of affairs, no party,

faction or sect has all of the saved in its corral, and therefore, no such clan or clique contains all of the saved upon earth. The called-out community is larger than any group regardless of the signboard behind which its adherents congregate, and the body of Christ is greater than any movement within it, or any movement in which we are. The person without sectarian bias is the one who through love for all, regards as transparent the barriers men have erected contrary to the divine purpose and pleasure, and sees his brethren upon both sides of them.

I once regarded these walls as composing a “hall of mirrors” and whichever way we looked we saw only our own reflections. I can see through them now as clearly as if I were looking through a clean windowpane. The marvelous grace of God has melted the quicksilver of hostility and bigotry and made it possible for me, like Paul, to regard as brothers those who fracture and fragment themselves by claiming to be of Paul, Cephas, Apollos, or even of Christ as a partisan symbol.

The sheep of God are not yet a gathered flock. They are still scattered over the sectarian hills. We will not help them greatly by creating another sect into which to summon them, or by training and turning loose a couple of shepherd dogs to bark at their heels and herd them inside our enclosure, if they find within us a spirit of arrogance and self-righteousness which they must imitate to be branded as “loyal” in the annual roundup. The fact is that we have disillusioned a lot of those whom we roped in the past and they have jumped the fence and headed back for the woods.

One does not become a sheep because he comes to us but because he comes to Christ! He does not prove that he belongs to the Good Shepherd by hearing us but by hearing him! The fact is that any sheep who tried to listen to all of the “Church of Christ shepherds” in the average city would become so dizzy he would think “the Lord’s church” is a merry-go-round or a baggage carousel. The cries of “Lo here!” and “Lo there!” will

have him running in a circle until he will become so dizzy he might turn out to be a goat and on the left side!

Every person on this rotating globe who sincerely believes with all of his heart that Jesus is the Messiah and the Son of God, and who has been immersed upon the basis of that faith, is God's child and my brother. I love him, receive him, and welcome him, where he is and as he is, for that is the way God received me. I do not receive him *because* of where he is but because of whose he is. It is not a question of what he is in, but of whom he is in, and who is in him.

If he is in Christ I am there with him. I believe there are Christians in the religious sects and parties which surround us. I am not in the fellowship with any sect, but I am in the fellowship with any child of God who is in them. Jesus did not die for sects but for persons. I detest sects and the spirit which created them, but I dearly love Christians and the Spirit who created them! And I shall try to love, not merely in word and in speech, but in deed and in truth!

TESTS OF COMMUNION

Integrity 2 (July 1977): 28, 29

Integrity

When the particular movement which eventually crystallized into a distinct and separate entity now universally denominated Church of Christ was launched, its advocates turned their guns against creeds. Those written formularies, some of them hoary with age, were regarded as dangerous to the spread of the kingdom of the Messiah for at least two good reasons. First, they dammed the stream of human thought, making further honest research impossible, and creating stagnant sects behind them where the scum of tradition gathered upon the surface. Secondly, they kept apart those who should be together in Christ Jesus by making demands of orthodoxy to which sincere minds could not prescribe.

Every written creed bears upon its face the time of its origin. Even though not dated by the calendar, the perceptive student can determine its approximate period by the statements contained and the verbiage employed. Every creed simply marks the progress of human rationalization about the will of God until its day. It gathers up and weighs the debates and mental deductions of the past and moulds them into a “recognized church order” which is bound upon every person who from that time on seeks identification with its makers and adherents.

The word creed is from the Latin *credo*, I believe. In reality there can be nothing sinful about an individual writing his

personal creed. It is no more wrong to write a statement of what one believes than to present it orally. The mistake lies not in writing a creed but in ceasing to write. To assume that at a given time in one's life he has arrived at the place where he has learned all there is to know about the divine-human relationship and that he should lock up his opinions at that time and throw the key away is not to demonstrate the degree of his intelligence but to reflect against it.

Humanly written creeds are useful only when they can be abandoned. One who is in college does not try to cram his body into the suit he wore in kindergarten. A high school student does not attempt to go to the shopping center on the tricycle of which he was so proud on his third Christmas. A thing which served a useful purpose in the past may become a hindrance in the present. A jacket is useful if it is not allowed to become a straitjacket.

The creed announced by heaven is that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. This is the prime fact of the universe, the propositional statement involving ultimate truth which, in its essence, is not propositional but eternal and personal. When one confesses this fact and validates his trust in it by submission to one act inducting him into the relationship involved in the fact, he has responded to the Good News. He is a member of the family, a citizen of the kingdom, a living stone in the temple. Our creed is Christ.

No one has a right to ask a believer in the fact of Jesus, as a term of his reception, what he thinks of instrumental music, one cup or multiple cups, or Sunday School classes. No one has the right to judge his loyalty to Jesus upon the basis of what he thinks about sponsorship of a radio or television program, or the means of its support. To do so is to create a sectarian creed and try to impose it upon a child of God. Such creeds are schismatic and divisive as are all human tests of fellowship and communion.

We have not only lost sight of God's majestic revelation of the divine purpose for union of all who believe in His Son, but we have also denied by our actions the basis upon which we began as a movement to plead for that union. As the sectarian world about us gives up its written creeds we proliferate our unwritten ones. At the most auspicious time in almost two centuries for our use as a catalytic agent to "unite the Christians in all of the sects" we are unable to receive one another in our own ranks.

In his debate with N. L. Rice on human creeds, Alexander Campbell said the reformers opposed creeds "because old parties were sustained by them, because they made new parties, and because they were roots of bitterness and apples of discord." Every party among us has sprung from a creed. Whatever one must consent to in order to be a member of a party is the creed of that party. In reverse, whatever is used as a means of discharging one from a party is the creed of that party. The grounds of excommunication determine the basis of communion.

A "loyal church" in our current parlance is not one whose members are faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, but one whose adherents are gathered around a party flagpole, a factional standard. They demonstrate their "faith" not by imitating the mercy and compassion of the Savior but by unquestioned allegiance to the position which separates and divides them from God's other children. Faith and trust in the redeemer and reconciler goes for nothing unless one also pays obeisance to the opinion out of which the faction grew. It will be difficult to get the rest of the world to unite with us when, the more they learn about us, the less they want to be like us. Most of them will hesitate about leaving a sect to become even more sectarian and exclusive. Our only hope is to keep our real motive under wraps until we can get them in! But deception is a sin!

THE TYRANNY OVER THOUGHT

Integrity 4 (October 1978): 56, 57

Integrity

Charles II was crowned king of England on April 23, 1661. His father, Charles I, had been beheaded on January 30, 1649. He had been found guilty of being a tyrant, murderer, and enemy of the nation. One of the first steps taken by Charles II was to restore the Episcopacy, and provide for the persecution of Nonconformists and Presbyterians. To provide against dissent and erosion of the Establishment he passed two decrees. One was the Conventicle Act which made it a crime for as many as five people to meet and discuss without first securing a writ of authority to do so. The other was the Five Mile Act which forbade the clergyman of any Free Church to come nearer than five miles to the limits of any city in the realm.

I thought of Charles II recently when I was visited by several members of an outstanding Christian family. Tired of the boredom of their Sunday school class they had invited a few members of the congregation to meet in their home with some of their neighbors for a friendly and meaningful study of the Bible. After the second week they were informed that they were proceeding without having first secured permission from the elders. They were given a cease and desist order unless an elder was present to supervise the study and sound the gong if any false doctrine was advocated.

The brother resented this intrusion and asked to meet with the elders. He insisted that he was head of his house and free to invite anyone he wanted to study with him. The elders insisted they were the overseers and intended to personally attend and supervise every meeting in which the word of God was studied. When the brother expressed opposition to such an arrangement he was warned that if he persisted in his course, he would be charged with rebellion against the authority of the Lord's church.

The apostle Peter, who was also an elder, specifically charged, "Do not try to rule over those who have been put in your care, but be examples to the flock." The idea that elders can invade the private home of a saint and tell him when he can study the word of God and who can be invited is absurd. On what ground can such men tell a brother that he must secure their permission to have a noontime Bible study in his office, or on a freight dock where he works? Such high-handed tactics are those of little men, grasping for power, frightened at their shadows.

If our "Establishment" must be maintained by tyranny it is time for a revolution. It will be difficult to change a system reinforced by custom and sanctified by preachers, even though not one verse of scripture sustains it. Long before Jesus arrived on earth, Aristotle wrote, "A tyrant must put on the appearance of uncommon devotion to religion. Subjects are less apprehensive of illegal treatment from a ruler whom they consider godfearing and pious. On the other hand, they do less easily move against him, believing that he has the gods on his side."

We have been tricked into developing a philosophy best expressed in the words, "*Vox presbuteros, vox Dei.*" "The voice of the elders is the voice of God." The galling yoke of servitude to men will never be broken by those who quietly resign themselves to it. Brethren are going to have to assert their right under God

to teach His precious word where and when its divine Author opens up a door. We are not under the rule of the clergy and there can be no Conventicle Act among us. The time has come when we must choose between the will of our Elder Brother and that of our brother elders!

A GATHERING OF FREE PEOPLE

Integrity 9 (March 1978): 137-38

Integrity

Many frustrated and disillusioned members of various parties in the restoration movement think nothing is being done, or can be done, to offset the exclusivism which maintains wide gulfs between the segments of believers. They are mistaken. All across our land experiments are going on leading to a betterment of conditions. Many of these are more cautious than bold, and consist of testing the temperature of the water by dangling the toes in it before wading into the shallows. One attempt to plunge into the depths is the Saint Louis Forum.

Originally known as the Hartford Forum, because it began at Hartford, Illinois, with a non-instrument congregation, this 25 year old thought exchange convenes annually during the Christmas holiday season in the auditorium of Saint Louis Christian College. From its inception there were two guidelines. One was the provision of an ample opportunity for open investigation of thorny and controversial matters which were given a hush-hush or one-sided treatment elsewhere. The other was to make it possible for men to be heard who were often ill-treated by their parties either as “liberals” or “extremists.”

There are five sessions in two days. In four of these, two men are invited to present forty-minute papers on a question

deemed important. They must then sit down together upon the platform and answer questions from the audience for forty minutes. Some of these questions are very probing, but there has never been a single untoward incident in all the years of meeting. The debating attitude is so lacking that when a speaker once sought to inject it and treat his fellow-speaker as an opponent, he fell flat on his face and retired from the scene with full recognition he had “flunked the course.”

Speakers are invited from Disciples of Christ, Christian Churches, and every party of the Churches of Christ. Every live issue has been discussed, some more than once. The role of women in the church was discussed by a man and woman. The charismatic movement featured one speaker who claimed to speak in tongues and another who said it was impossible. In every instance, whether the question deals with fellowship, theistic evolution, or instrumental music, an honest attempt is made to provide a hearing for both sides. Two medical doctors discussed the abortion issue. No speaker is barred on the ground that he is “too radical” provided he respects his brethren— all of them.

Questions in the 1977 forum, held on December 28, 29, were: Is the baptism of the Holy Spirit available to believers today? What should be our relationship with believers in Christ in denominations outside of our restoration movement heritage? Is the practice of hiring a man to serve as the pastor of a congregation having elders in harmony with the New Testament scriptures? To what extent did first century culture affect the content of the New Testament and its demands upon believers?

Speakers were Ken Jensen, Indianapolis; W. Carl Ketcherside, Saint Louis; James Robinson, Saint Louis; Phil Young, Lawrenceville, Ill.; Edward Fudge, Athens, Ala.; Chuck Sackett, Granite City, Ill.; Don Haymes, Memphis; and Andrew Paris, Florissant, Mo. All speakers come at their own expense. Those in attendance came from eleven states from Oregon to

New York. The 1978 forum is scheduled for December 28, 29.

THE PENALTY FOR DISSENT

Integrity 10 (April 1978): 153-54

Integrity

Before me lies a letter from a brother who wrote in deep distress. He had just received a cold epistle signed by the elders of the congregation where he had attended for almost a quarter of a century. He was charged with teaching heresy for stating in the adult Bible class one Sunday that he believed there were Christians in other groups besides "The Church of Christ." He made no attempt to bind this view upon others. Nor was he given an option of publicly confessing that he had sinned in thus expressing his conviction or he would be excommunicated as a false teacher.

There was to be no opportunity for explanation or defense. He had been tried, condemned and sentenced in the hearts of men who would not even grant him an opportunity to plead his case. Such reprehensible conduct would not be tolerated in courts manned by pagans. "I told them that we Romans are not in the habit of handing over any man accused of a crime before he has had the chance of defending himself against the accusation." So spoke Porcius Festus, a Roman governor. That the very opposite approach is indulged in by congregations made up of those who profess allegiance to Jesus of Nazareth is incredible. It shows they are far more sectarian in spirit than those whom they assail from protected pulpits and in partisan papers.

Whether there are Christians in other groups or not is not the real question. Rather it is whether one who holds the opinion that there are must button his lip in perpetual silence or express a lie to remain in the congregation. Must he be doomed to the somber silence of the sepulcher or to the fellowship of falsehood to be looked upon as loyal? Does one's salvation depend upon slavery to the unwritten creeds of uncharitable caretakers of orthodoxy?

The brother to whom I refer has lived in honesty and humility in the community. Not a word of scandal has ever been raised against him. As a teacher in high school he has shaped the lives of scores of students. He has attended the local congregation and patiently endured messages majoring in mediocrity. He has been generous in giving of time, treasure and talent. But all of that counts for nothing! He must now publicly renounce a deep personal conviction which commends itself as true, or be driven forth to be regarded callously as "a heathen man and publican."

This is not reverence for the authority of the Christ. It is a return to the spirit of the Dark Ages, a reversion to the atmosphere of the Spanish Inquisition. It makes sincere dissent a criminal act, and thinking for oneself a heinous thing. It is bred of fear and nurtured in ignorance of the life and fruits of the Holy Spirit. And it will condemn a once glorious movement to extinction, stabbed to death by its own hand, slain with the keen-edged dagger of its own conformity.

What a tragedy that when even a recent pope threw open the window to let a little fresh air into the musty confines of Romanism, that our own brethren should be stuffing the cracks with the mud of traditionalism to guarantee that the stifling staleness not escape. Alan Barth in *The Loyalty of Free Men* said in 1951, "Thought that is silenced is always rebellious... Majorities, of course, are often mistaken. This is why the silencing of minorities is necessarily dangerous. Criticism and

dissent are the indispensable antidote to major delusions.”

It is not punishment to be excluded from a congregation where honest dissent is regarded as sacrilegious. You punish one when you send him to jail, not when you open the door and grant him his “walking papers.” Archibald MacLeish said, “The dissenter is every human being at those moments of his life when he resigns momentarily from the herd and thinks for himself.” May God deliver us from the herd-mentality!

THE CHIEF BLESSING

Integrity 11 (May 1978): 166-67

Integrity

Recently I finished a biography of Samuel Johnson, written by John Wain. It embraces 385 pages. I had long had a desire to read about Johnson from the pen of someone other than James Boswell. I was intrigued by the life of a man who lived in England during our American Revolution, and who was a close friend of such contemporary notables as the statesman Edmund Burke, the actor David Garrick, the painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the author Oliver Goldsmith. Wain, who is Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and a successful writer, presented a fascinating story of a unique character.

Johnson, who was the sage of London coffeehouses, in which he dispensed great draughts of wisdom, knew the depths of poverty and the cruel sting of repeated disappointment. He suffered from terrifying diseases of the body, but he knew the source of inner strength. In his private journal for January 1772, he records his completion of the reading of the Bible, and adds, "I hope to read the whole Bible once a year as long as I live." This resolution is but one of many sentences I underlined with red ink as I went through the book.

As I turn back and read these again I find more of them dealing with hope than any other theme. "It is worth a thousand pounds a year to have the habit of looking on the bright side of things." "Hope is the chief blessing of man; and that hope only is

rational of which we are sensible that it cannot deceive us.” “Where there is no hope, there can be no endeavor.” These gems of thought mean much to me because they reinforce my own philosophy of life.

I am constantly asked if I think the battle being waged for the unity of all believers in Christ will ever achieve its objective. Of course it will. Every blow struck against the towering mountain of bigotry, hostility, and sectarian indifference crumbles minute portions of its granite surface, but some day the cumulative force of all those blows will be felt and the quake will reduce the frowning parapet to rubble. We have need of patience. God is not asleep. The Holy Spirit has not retired. The prayer of Jesus that all who believe in him may be one has not been lost amidst the din of conflict of twenty centuries.

In the movement of which we are heirs, there will be healing of rifts. Men cannot always exist on a diet of diatribe and despair. Partisan heroes will lose their glamor. Many are already doing so. Raucous voices of defenders of the status quo will die away. Brethren will become ashamed of their littleness. The restoration movement will come to know a reformation movement. The chill snow cover of exclusivism will melt away. The chains of sectarian enslavement will fall from the heart. The tributaries will flow toward a common channel. Showers of blessing will fall upon the parched desert and wilderness.

There will continue for a while the bitter attacks by puny defenders of the orthodoxy of opinion, but the cult of mediocrity will lose its power. No great goal has ever been reached without hardship. No great discovery has ever been made without the discoverer having been assaulted. One who is not willing to endure suffering must surrender any thought of sharing in glory. God's will must be done and it will be done. I intend to labor within that will and under its canopy until death stills my tongue and my pen drops from nerveless fingers. It was Bruce Barton who wrote, “Before you give up hope, turn back and

read the attacks that were made upon Lincoln.” To which I add that while you are doing so, turn back and read again those made upon Paul.

Despair envisions the moment, hope encompasses the future. Discouragement writhes within the enveloping strands, hope seeks for the knot which unravels the skein. We are on our way out of a long night of division and strife, much of it over trivia. The day is beginning to break and the shadows to flee away. The glacier of icy unconcern for God’s children is beginning to melt. The rivulets of fellowship are beginning to gleam in the sunlight. As Martin Luther said, “Give men time!”

AN OPEN FORUM

Integrity 1 (June 1978): 12, 13

Integrity

There are some indications that we are growing up and maturing as a people. It has been very difficult to move into the last quarter of the twentieth century because we began as a nineteenth century reformatory movement and inherited all the hangups which are part of a rural and frontier culture. We are now in the Space Age but are still altogether too much preoccupied with issues that have no relevance in our day. The fact that many of them have been debated and argued for more than a century by equally honest and intelligent men who reverence the sacred scriptures proves beyond doubt they are not as clearly delineated and plainly taught as partisan scribes would make it appear.

In the annual Saint Louis Forum which consists of five two-hour sessions, one of those periods is set aside as an absolutely open forum in which any saint, male or female, can give public expression to his or her feelings about the question of the hour. It is still the least attended of the sessions, indicating that most people like to be present when two “professionals” square off against each other, and they can be spectators rather than participants. This too is an inherited tradition it will be difficult to overcome. The “clergy complex” is stronger than most of us realize. It may be the most ardently practiced and most vehemently denied of any of our borrowed trappings.

The last forum found fifteen persons addressing themselves to the question, “What do you consider to be the greatest threat to our Christian witness?” The speakers ranged in age from 19 to 84 years. They ran the gamut from students in college to retired persons. Among the specific points which they urged as real threats to our effective testimony in this secular age I listed the following. Division in our ranks; a lack of morality and ethics; spiritual illiteracy, coupled with apathy and worldliness; institutionalism and a loss of simplicity in Christ; and a negativistic attitude which destroys hope.

One brother felt we had developed a state of dependency upon a special clergy. Others suggested we held a wrong concept of the church, and were hindered by obsolete translations of the Bible. Fear of men, satisfaction with the status quo, affluency and humanism, were all brought forward as impediments and stumbling-blocks. A very articulate young man felt we were wholly lacking in practical application of the philosophy of the second mile as enunciated by Jesus.

It was a precious opportunity for me to sit in the audience and listen to humble saints, some of whom had come in from the daily marketplace, tell of their inner concerns for the cause to which they were committed. I could have been overwhelmed by the problems they enumerated but my stance was optimistic. The community of the reconciled has never been free of problems from without or within, and so long as it is composed of human beings, never will be. But so long as we realize that we have problems and can identify them, we can move toward solving them. It is only when we congratulate ourselves that “we are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” that we are in trouble.

What a reformation would come if preachers and elders in every congregation would announce a two-hour session in which every person could speak openly, frankly and honestly about conditions, without fear of reprisal. Men who have been trained

to speak now need new lessons in how to listen. The input of all the saints will increase the output of the body. If you want to develop an idea of how to be different, listen to different ideas. Much of our preaching has been a one-way street and some of it has led us down a blind-alley.

PLAYING IT SAFE

Integrity 4 (October 1978): 56, 57

Integrity

The unity of all believers in Christ has been hindered and postponed by many things. It is time for all men of goodwill to examine their thinking. Regardless of the party into which they have been maneuvered by circumstances, they will never be able to contribute to the mess of the saints until they rid themselves of some common fallacies which act as impediments to the answer of the prayer of our precious Lord.

One such fallacy is the “playing it safe” syndrome. Many keep aloof from others on this basis. Where scripture has not spoken and the mind of God has not been revealed, the argument is frequently made, “Would it not be safer to do thus and so?” Out of this is born the cults of conformity and the parties of perpetuation. Would it not be safer not to have Sunday schools? Would it not be safer to use one container in the Lord’s Supper? Or unleavened bread? Or fermented wine? Would it not be safer to segregate ourselves from others who differ with us about the millennium? The things adopted today merely because they are safer become the dogmas of tomorrow. Sanctified by usage and familiarity they are transferred into the pattern.

The whole attitude assumes that God thinks more of legalistic consistency and correctness of opinion than He does of unity within His family. Yet He has not spoken about these other

matters but has repeatedly condemned schism. What we need is not men who “play it safe” but those who make themselves vulnerable. Jesus did this when He left heaven. If He had subscribed to our thinking He would never have come to earth.

We tend to confuse sameness with saneness. But the sane thinking recall that Jesus not only took the most dangerous step possible, but commanded us to live dangerously. He plainly told us to take up our cross daily and follow Him. He said the only way to find life is by losing it, and losing life is the opposite of playing it safe. We are on the cutting-edge rather than on the dulled and blunted side of life. To promote unity among all believers is not a task for a cowardly and fainthearted person who weighs the results against his own safety and chooses the latter.

We need to get out of our feathered nests and go where the people are. We have quaintly imagined they would all come to us, beating a path to our door to associate with us. Not only have they not done so, but our losses are almost as much as our gains in some places. If a congregation really wants to affect the world for good let it have the courage to go by twos and fours to attend other places— Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Reformed, or whatever. Let them go, not to debate, but to see and understand how people propose to ship God, and why. Let them form friendships and encourage mutual study across lines, preferably in homes.

Are we afraid we will lose some of our members? Perhaps we deserve to lose them! If we must keep people locked up to keep them with us, we do not really have them at all. It is only free people who can freely associate without fear. We can never grow together while standing aloof from one another. It is only by change of thoughts and ideas that mutual respect for one another can ever be achieved. Playing it safe, as a philosophy of life, would never have allowed Jesus to leave heaven and will never allow us to enter it!

WE NEED INTEGRITY

Integrity 5 (November 1978): 74, 75

Integrity

I have often thought how fortunate it was that the brethren selected *Integrity* as the name of this significant little journal. When I saw my first copy there came to my mind the statement of Samuel Johnson, “Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.” I had seen the futility of the first and the havoc wreaked by the second. It seemed to me that, in launching this new vessel of communication upon troubled waters, brethren were setting for themselves a tremendous goal for journalism among those who had long been subjected to censorship and one-sided presentation.

Integrity is from the same root word as integrate which means to bring together into a whole, to unify. Integrity is to be complete or undivided. Our sectarian attitude had decreed that many of the papers be purely partisan mouthpieces, oracles of a single opinion. To write about issues which had been kept in the cellar, to allow divergent views to be expressed, to refuse to be frightened off by false accusation, insinuation and innuendo, to be honest, open and sincere— all of this was needed. But it required a particular kind of dedication which had often been sadly lacking.

I am happy to say the brethren have succeeded to a remarkable degree in progress toward their original goal. The

articles have been challenging. Some of them have been daring. The stance of the editor has been non-sectarian. This is evidenced in the fact that the paper is read across many lines. It is regarded as fair and honest even by those who disagree with its general thrust. Minds have been changed. Hearts have been enlarged. Lives have been enriched by reading it. That it should accomplish this in such an abbreviated amount of space is proof that “diamonds do not come in piano boxes.”

Only those who have edited papers without commercial advertising, or without subscription rates, know the difficulty of continuing each month with costs going higher. Such papers must depend upon the willingness of those who share in their intentions and aspirations. If everyone who read would show his appreciation by mailing a check each time he has been benefitted the financial problems of the editor would end and he could concentrate upon the content. I am aware of the move to revise the approach in the office. I am thoroughly in favor of it.

Justice Robert Jackson wrote in 1943: “Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ on things that touch the heart of the existing order.” We need honest dissent. Without it our ignorance will be frozen at its present level. Our brethren need integrity. They also need *Integrity*.

INSTAURATIO MAGNA

Integrity 6 (December 1978): 92, 93

Integrity

Among a number of large books I have recently read was a biography of Sir Francis Bacon. I had long been intrigued by this philosopher who occupied such a prominent place in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth, James I and Charles I. Never one to dream little dreams, he was the author, among other works, of *Novum Organum*, of which King James said, "It is like the peace of God, which passes all human understanding." It was the second book in a never-completed greater thesis which Bacon called *Instauratio Magna*, a review and encyclopedia of all knowledge.

Instauration is from a word meaning to renew. It means "restoration after decay or lapse." *Instauratio Magna* means great renewal or restoration. *Novum Organum* helped imbue science with a spirit of unbiased and accurate observation. Bacon maintained that all prejudices and preconceived attitudes must be abandoned. He designated these as "idols" because their maintenance came between the minds of men and their attainment of truth. There were "idols of the tribe," which were the common property of the race due to common methods of thought; there were "idols of the cave," representing the peculiar possession of the individual. There were "idols of the market place," which arose from too great a trust in or dependence upon language. There were "idols of the theater," representing tradition.

I am one of the minor heirs of a magnificent attempt to introduce an *Instauratio Magna*, a great renewal or restoration after centuries of lapse, into a fragmented and ripped-off religious world. It never became as great as it should have, or could have, because it lost its way. By the third generation it was accumulating prejudices and preconceptions. These became idols which took the mind off God and centered on leaders and their ideas. It was born in the Second Great Awakening, but forgot its purpose and began to worship itself.

Although there is a great deal of disagreement, I see definite signs that the western world is moving toward a Third Great Awakening. It will spill over into the Orient this time. Russia will be affected. China will have to reckon with it. The one great thing which deters it now is the division among the believers. The world will not be won to believe in Jesus until those who believe in Jesus are one. So said our King and so I believe.

This is the time when believers in His Lordship should be waging peace as others wage war. It must not be a Baptist thrust, or a Church of Christ thrust, or an Assembly of God thrust. All such attempts would be sectarian. They would be dedicated to bringing men to us instead of to Jesus. We must really begin to believe that one can be a Christian and a Christian only. Not a Baptist Christian. Not a Church of Christ Christian. Not a Christian Church Christian. If we can get the sectarian lead out of our shoes we can be ready to march for conquest of the world.

The world is crying for renewal. Renewal can only come by recovery of that which has become lost, distorted or obscured. Renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. This is the kind of thing which will earn the approval of every disciple of Jesus, regardless of the sect in which he has been reared. This does not mean the formation of another sect containing the pure. It means purging every sect by

the Word until it is no longer a sect. The party spirit can be eliminated just as any other sin can be washed away in the blood of the Son of God.

It is obvious that we should begin with ourselves. We must cast our exclusiveness, our “better-than-thou” attitudes, our prejudices and preconceptions to the moles and bats. We must start to lift up holy hands without wrath and doubting and not offer Pharisaical prayers of self-adulation and congratulation. We can be the nucleus for an *Instauratio Magna*, a great new movement of renewal.

ARE WE A CHURCH?

Integrity 7 (January 1979): 108, 109

Integrity

Modern sectarianism is a post-apostolic development. It did not spring up overnight and will not be eliminated in a day. It is true that believers in the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus had problems while the apostles were still among them, but the idea of separating and forming distinct sects seems never to have occurred to them. The political and religious sects among the Jews met at one temple. They did not set up rival establishments. Synagogues were places of prayer, study and discussion, and were not involved in sectarian exclusiveness.

As badly as Corinth was divided they all met together in the same place, although their abuse of the *agape*, or feast of love, made it impossible for them to eat the Lord's Supper which was an expression of *koinonia*, the sharing of the common life. Those who "went out from among us" as mentioned by John were "not of us." They did not believe that Jesus had come in the flesh. They denied both the Father and the Son. John declared that if they had been of us, that is, if they had shared the conviction that Jesus had come in the flesh, "they no doubt would have continued with us."

It is probably making a use of this which the apostles never intended, and would even repudiate, to apply it to brethren who leave a "Church of Christ" and move to another part of the city and plant another "Church of Christ" using instrumental music

or deprecating the use of classes or individual cups. As sad as this is, because it makes something besides Jesus a test of union or communion, it is not in the category of those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh. Besides that, the restoration movement left the Redstone and Mahoning Valley Baptist Associations to open up as “The Church of Christ,” so the Baptists could tar us with the same stick with which we seek to besmirch others.

The problem we face is that it probably never occurred to Peter, James and John that believers in the central truth of the ages, all of whom made the “good confession,” would ever crystallize around the observations and deductions from what they wrote, by Huss, Calvin, Wesley or Campbell, and form separate parties to protect their conclusions. Certainly it never occurred to them that such believers would call their parties *ecclesiae*, or be transmuted into what we call churches. Accordingly, there are no real guidelines for dealing with the matter, and we are left with the expedient of confronting the situation by application of general principles enunciated in conjunction with other conditions not parallel to the present.

It would seem that a primary step to the unity of all who believe in Christ on the basis of apostolic testimony would be to quit thinking of them as forming churches. If we are to use the word church at all, and there are a good many grave reasons why we should not, there is but one. The *ekklesia* is a divine organism, and not a human organization. There never was but one. There never will be another. No man can call another man out of the world. No man can call us together into one body. That is the work of the Spirit.

There is no such thing as a Methodist *Church*. There is a Methodist party consisting of believers in Jesus who ostensibly crystallized around the teachings and deductions of John Wesley. The Methodist *Church* is perpetuated today by its traditions, its forms and structures, and not by peculiar belief. John Wesley would no more recognize it as something he is

alleged to have started than Alexander Campbell would recognize “The Church of Christ” as something growing out of “The Declaration and Address.” There is no Presbyterian *Church*, but there is a party of believers in Jesus which collected around the philosophical rationalization of John Calvin.

There is no such thing as “The Church of Christ” in the eyes of God. This was a creation of men growing out of a movement to unite the Christians in all of the sects and projected to gain a special and separate listing in the United States Census of “religious bodies.” But there is only one body. Every saved person on earth is in it. That body is no sect, and no sect is that body. It is not a coalition of sects or a composite of them all.

We were all baptized into one body by one Spirit. The Holy Spirit never immersed anyone into any party or sect, whether ours or that of others. We can help to further the eternal purpose of God if we quit thinking of “other churches,” and if we start treating all believers as believers, not as unbelievers or pagans. In the new covenant sense a believer is one who assents to the great proposition that “Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Many believers are wrong about a lot of things, and many are currently wrong about who believers are.

THE ONE BODY (3)

Integrity 6 (December 1983): 83-85

Integrity

The body of Christ is not a sect. And no sect is the body of Christ. The ekklesia, by its very definition, embraces all who are called of God in every age, clime and nation. A sect, by its definition, includes only a small part of the saved, and may include many who are not. It is important that, in order to grasp the significance of the one body, we understand of what it is comprised or composed. In our day of multiplied confusion there are those who think of the body as made up of all the sects. The World Council of Churches meeting in Amsterdam, resolved to give its backing to a movement to bring all of the sects under the shade of one umbrella, and thus further an answer to the prayer of Jesus for the unity of all believers.

The movement to accomplish this was known as the ecumenical movement. The word is derived from *oikumene*, the habitable earth, which in turn comes from *oikos*, or habitation. It is used in the sense of universal. It was adopted in the place of catholic, which also means universal, because of the possibility of misunderstanding due to the adoption of the term by the Roman Church. The word catholic comes from *kata*, throughout, and *holos*, the whole. It thus means throughout the whole earth or creation. The Greek catholicon referred to a medicine which was a panacea, a universal cure for all diseases. The term "catholic" was first applied to the whole community of faith by Ignatius, in his letter to Smyrna. It was soon picked up and given general

usage.

Actually the Catholic Church is not catholic at all and never was. It is Roman. The only catholic body on earth is the one body, which includes all of the saved. The ecumenical movement which began with so much fanfare and with such high hopes has fallen upon hard times, as well it might. After reams of paper had been written about it it was finally reduced to searching out the least common denominator of agreement. Many of those who wrote and worked diligently for ecumenicity were good men, theologians of note. But they were working for an unattainable ideal.

Uniting all of the sects will not produce the one body. No amalgamation or federation of sects can do that. All that will be done by such an action will be to create one large sect out of a group of smaller ones. And while that might be desirable from a tactical standpoint the danger is intensified. Sects are opposed to the will of the absent King. They exist as rebels to his rule. They are works of the flesh, created by the party spirit, and instead of contriving means of binding them together, we should be thinking of how to influence their adherents to repent of their formation, confess their wrong in so doing and abandoning them.

The party spirit is a dangerous and malevolent thing. Every sect that has ever existed was spawned by it. To ignore it while uniting the parties it has begotten will be of no ultimate avail. Other sects will result. It must be removed and this can only be done by radical surgery. But first there must be an inner revulsion against the virus. So long as we think that the body of Christ may somehow be brought to light by uniting all of the sects we will do little to rid ourselves of the party spirit. The body of Christ exists at the same time as do the sects. It is obscured and inhibited by them all. The only thing we can do is to rid ourselves of the parasites which have attached themselves to the body and are sucking the life from it. They are barnacles

on the Ship of Zion.

The body does not consist of congregations, all practicing the same routine, parroting the same words or observing the same ritual. Congregations are like those who compose them. They are all unique. They have different problems. The seven congregations in Asia Minor were not alike. Had they been one letter would have served them all. The Greek congregations were not like the Jewish. If we got all of the congregations in the world into the same pattern, responding like robots, and all on the same computer list, we still would not have the one body. Abject conformity is not necessarily uniformity of purpose.

The record says, “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” That is both reassuring and frightening. It is comforting because regardless of how a congregation behaves they will not affect my standing provided I remain true and continue to function in the way I am gifted to do. This is contrary to what a lot of people think but it is eminently scriptural. Even in Pergamum where some held the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, hidden manna and a new name were promised to those who conquered. At Thyatira where Jezebel was allowed to teach the fornication and eating of meats offered to idols was approved, those who conquered were promised the morning star. Nothing is said about leaving the congregation to start a “loyal” one. All of the seven congregations in Asia Minor started out as faithful. It could be that the quickest way to fill the world with “unfaithful” churches is to go out and begin to start a bunch of “faithful” ones. It still remains that not one word is ever said about leaving a congregation into which false teaching has crept.

Apparently this was not a part of the divine strategy for coping with error. The idea of running from it might gratify our sense of what to do in an emergency, but it never occurred to the Lord or to his apostles. The proliferation of congregations by the “pull out” method is neither good, honest or just. We still have

them to contend with. It is the easiest way out to run from trouble, but we should never forget that it leaves trouble in charge. Surely the members of the congregation at Corinth had ample justification, for pulling up stakes, and moving on down the road, but it never occurred to Paul to recommend it. Instead he said he wanted to come and spend the winter with them.

No one is ever held accountable for what he disavows. No one is charged with spotting his garments so long as they are clean. Even to Sardis Jesus had John write, "You still have a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Yet Sardis was at the point of death spiritually, and was summoned to repentance. But we are individually members of the body.

The frightening part of this is found when we realize that we are responsible for our own actions. We cannot hide among the other sheep, nor conceal ourselves among the other members of the group. Whatever I do will affect the body in one way or another. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." Thus far, one of the most difficult things has been to cultivate that degree of interest. All of us tend to be selfish, all of us tend to think only of our concerns. Surely it is a goal at which to aim.

Perhaps we should say a word about the term "members" as used in the scriptures. It never refers, as it does today, to someone who is merely attached to an institution or organization. We speak of men being members of associations, lodges or boards of directors. By this we mean they have paid an admission fee or have been elected. The Greeks had no word for such an arrangement. To them a member was a functioning part of an organism, as an arm, a hand or a foot. A member was one who sustained a vital, living relationship to the whole, contributing his part to the life and functioning of the body.

There was no such thing in the original ekklesia as people

who just attended to observe a ritual. Everyone felt a vital interest in the growth and health of the body. All were alert to the deepest need for Christ of every individual whom they met. The reason for doing good was not to be acclaimed, but that others seeing them, might glorify the Father in heaven. Now, too often, our religion is manipulated by the clock rather than by our heart. It will take some doing to get back on the track again.

THE ONE BODY (4)

Integrity 1 (January-February 1984): 11-13

Integrity

It is interesting to note the use of the word “body” in the last nine verses of First Corinthians. It is found eight times in the Authorized Version. It occurs in a context which begins with a discussion of things which are lawful and expedient. Paul had just finished dealing with the problem of brethren suing and impleading each other in heathen courts and before pagan judges. He concludes that it would be better to take wrong and to suffer oneself to be defrauded. Instead he accused them of acting unjustly and of defrauding the brethren.

He then points out that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God and details a number of sins of which they were guilty at Corinth. Next he mentions their statement that “All things are lawful for me.” He shows it was not without limitation in its practical use. It is true within a certain sphere. One is that it also be profitable. It is quite true that there may be no law against certain things, but they are profitable, that is inexpedient. The smoking of cigarettes may be lawful, but the fact that they are with increasing frequency the cause of cancer makes them highly profitable. No doubt it is this fact which make so many of those who plead their lawfulness also deplore the fact that they began what has turned into an inveterate habit.

This is the second reason why Paul argues against

indulgence on the basis of pure legality. Some things tend to enslave. They cease to be servants and become masters. Who has not known of alcoholics, hopelessly enslaved by their intense cravings? These things dominate the person til he becomes crushed and hopeless under their influence. Some are gluttons. They dig their graves with their teeth. They eat, not to gratify hunger but from a craving which grips them. The apostle argues that though it be admitted that all things are lawful, it is not lawful for one to be under the dominance of anything.

There was a proverbial statement bandied around half-jokingly— meats for the belly and the belly for meats. Paul points out that while there is a measure of truth in the proverb it is equally true both will be destroyed. Meats will decompose, spoil and be cast aside. Those which are taken into the body will not permanently satisfy hunger. They will be digested, absorbed to bodily tissues, and the residue or waste resulting will be cast off in defecation. And the belly itself is only for this life. It too will resolve itself into elements and will be eaten by worms of the dust.

And while it may be argued that the belly was made for meats it can be equally firmed that the body was not made fornication. It was easy to contend that the only way hunger could be satisfied was by the eating of meat and the only way sex hunger could be satisfied was by the indulgence in sexual activities. The warped philosophy of the Corinthians coupled with the tendency to engage in sexual congress made it easy for their reason to be distorted. The apostle argues that instead of the body being made for fornication it is rather made for the Lord. And the Lord is for the body. Just as it requires two to engage in illicit ships so it requires two to have spiritual affinity.

The belly will be destroyed and so will the meats which gratify it. But that is not true of either the Lord or the body. God has raised up the Lord and He will also raise us up by His own power. There is a permanence about us which cannot be satisfied

by casual indulgence or temporary liaisons. We were not made for a temporary relationship but for one which transcends this life and will be validated by our being raised from the dead as Jesus was.

Our bodies are members of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:12 the word declares that “As the body is one and hath many members... so also is Christ.” Our bodies are his members. He functions through them. From another standpoint our members are instruments of righteousness unto God. We are to yield them as servants to righteousness unto holiness. One cannot be holy and engage in fornication. It is noteworthy that it is not the congregation as such, which constitutes Christ. It is our bodies which are members of the Lord. If I join my body with a prostitute I am not only reflecting against myself but against Jesus. Such momentary indulgence in gratification “bought for a price” dishonors the Lord who craves me for his very own and paid the price for me.

The apostle points out that to join in licit sex with a prostitute makes you one body with her. In this intimacy both lose their identity and merge together into one body, a new body which did not exist before the union. He reasons that this is true because God taught in the beginning of marriage that the two shall become one flesh. But that is the desire of Christ, to have such a relationship with us that the two of us become one. To disregard this and indulge in the passionate embrace of a prostitute is to thwart the divine purpose. We sustain the same relationship with Jesus in a spiritual sense that we sustain physically with a member of the opposite sex. The orgasmic reflex of the spirit should be just as acute and carry the same thrill as that of the flesh.

Flee fornication. This is the only sin we are specifically told to run from. The only way to fight fornication is with the hat. Grab it and run. To play around with it means loss of virtue. It cannot be argued with, for he who stops to argue has half

succumbed. Joseph fled, leaving his coat in the hands of the temptress. He kept himself pure. In doing so, he set an example for every other teen-ager in the world. Fornication is an especially destructive sin because it affects the body of him who commits it. Every other sin is without one's own body. He who commits fornication sins against his own body. Take notice that fornication is branded as sin, and a pernicious sin at that. In our present culture it is often winked at or made the butt of jokes. But in "the great payday in the skies" when God settles up accounts, he who is guilty and has not repented and secured forgiveness will find that his indulgence was no laughing matter with the judge of all the earth.

Another reason for abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul is that they defile the temple of the Holy Spirit. One of the great blessings of the new covenant is the fact that Deity dwells in us. A temple, among the Greeks, was the lodging-place of a god. The temple of Aphrodite at Corinth was considered to be her habitation among mortals. God's design for man had been gradually leading him to this day. At first man drew near from an altar of earth, then from one of unhewn field stones, then God met with man from between the wings of the cherubim on the mercy-seat in the inner sanctum of the tabernacle. Finally, Solomon created a magnificent temple made with hands.

But the coming of Jesus banished ritualism, institutionalism and liturgy. Pure and undefiled religion became a matter of relationship to widows and orphans. It consisted of maintaining the purity of one's garments from the filthiness of the daily contact with the world. We became sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, He dwells in us and walks in us. He became our God. We became his people, the temple of the living God. In the progress of time there awaits but one more dimension. It is the eternal city. John saw no temple in it, for the Lord Almighty and the Lamb is the temple of it. The only city in history in which was no shrine, holy place or temple. The

evolution of man's association with the divine will be complete.

As for the present status of our ship upon earth my body is the temple of my God. It is composed of cells and capillaries, of tissues and tendons. These are attacked by disease and weakened by age. Pain and suffering occur. Sometimes it seems too great to bear. Yet I am the temple of the Holy Spirit. God gave us the Spirit. He sent Him to dwell in me. I do not belong to myself. I cannot do my own thing. I cannot please myself. I am not my own. I was purchased, redeemed and reconciled. The price was not silver and gold but the precious blood of Jesus as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

I am to glorify God in my body and spirit. They are God's. He bought them for a habitation. Shall I trash them, vandalize them, smear them? Shall I make them look like the city garbage dump? Shall I value the tenant so lightly as to expose him to the sin of prostitution? It would be ridiculous to pass by a beautiful mansion inhabited by the governor of the state and fling tar upon it. Those who do such things speak far more eloquently of themselves than they do of the governor. Vandalism never reveals the character of the one being attacked, only that of the attacker.

RENEWAL THROUGH RECOVERY

Integrity 4 (July-August 1986): 57-59

Integrity

The God whom I serve and love— and the God who loves me— is a God of history. He made it! And he is still making it! He did not retire on “social insecurity” just because he ended “the work which he had made.” The congregation of the saints, the gathering together of the believers in Jesus, is part of that history. I am sure my readers will forgive me if I regard it as a major part. It was a decisive breakthrough in the battle against Satan and his angels. They have never recovered from it. They never will!

It was the apostles and prophets to whom he made known the mystery by revelation. That mystery had not been declared to the sons of men in previous generations. Revelation is the uncovering for man of what he could not discover for himself. The mystery was the fellowship. And the declaration of its being made known is given in the letter of togetherness— that to the Ephesians. The word together occurs seven times, the word grace twelve times in the six small chapters into which it has been divided, sometimes unwisely.

God did not launch the Ship of Zion on the stormy waters of human thought and behavior and abandon it. He was as interested in the revolutions as he was in the revelation. He was

concerned about Huss and Luther, Wycliffe and Tyndale, Wesley and Calvin. He was moved by the Waldensians and Albigensians. He was concerned with the invention of printing by Gutenberg. He knew about Barton W. Stone, Walter Scott, Thomas Campbell and Alexander Campbell. He also knew about George Campbell of Aberdeen, James Macknight, and Phillip Doddridge, from whom they were constantly borrowing and frequently quoting. He was as familiar with Campbell's Living Oracles, as he was with his own oracles committed to the Jews which gave them such an advantage over the uncircumcised.

He was aware of the development and growth of some 25 "restoration movements" in the fifty years starting with the American Revolution. They were in the hollow of his hand. Some of these resulted from the aftermath of that war. Others had their roots in the old world. The climate of the Second Great Awakening which began to sweep America after the French Revolution was conducive to such reform. It was a protest against the ignorance, the decadence, the violence and the vileness of the frontier. It was also a living testimony against the lack of spirituality and looseness in morality which characterized the life of the pioneers.

Heirs of a Movement

I am happy to be the heir of one of those movements started by good Presbyterians. It was just that, and nothing more. I am not so foolish as to think of it as the church. Once I did and that was the fountain of the sectarian spirit which I imbibed. Now I can see that the gravest error ever committed against that noble experiment was when it was allowed to become a church. It was driven to that because of the opposition, persecution and mockery directed toward it. It has lost almost two centuries milling around in the sectarian thicket since then. We must honestly face the fact that it may never find its way out.

But there will be other movements under God's amazing grace.

The Declaration and Address, which has been called the Magna Carta of the reformation movement as the Campbell's thought of it, specifically declares that "this Society by no means considers itself a Church." It desired to adopt and recommend such measures as would give rest to the brethren throughout all the churches. Repeatedly it referred to "our dear brethren of all denominations." It pointed out: "We have our educational prejudices and peculiar customs to struggle against as well as they." At first glance it seems that those who subscribed to it would hold themselves aloof from any denominational alliance and by association be able to advise and counsel all of the Christians in every one of them. That hope went glimmering and a denomination was formed which, in many communities, refused to have anything to do with others.

A Purpose in History

What was accomplished by this reform? Fortunately, there were several things which it did that brought credit to it. For one thing, in its inception, it demonstrated that one could be a Christian, and a Christian only. In a day of rigid alliance to men and their narrow creedalism, it proved that one of the most effective ways to fight sectarianism was to love all who professed faith in Jesus but to be a member of no party. "Disentangled from the accruing embarrassments of intervening ages" they submitted as follows: "That the Church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one." It is regrettable to admit that it was not too many years until the movement ceased to move. Not only did it come to a standstill but actually began to regress.

Another great stride forward was the death of creeds. These synopses of belief were reckoned as the basis for faith by virtually all of the groups which had gathered themselves

around a man and his teaching. Those who were illiterate could memorize the creed and parrot it and thus feel justified in the divine presence. Many were hard put to explain it but they could recite it by rote. The Campbellian reformation, with its penchant for slogans said: "A creed either contains what the Bible says or it does not. If it contains more than the Bible it contains too much, if less than the Bible it contains too little, if exactly what the Bible contains we do not need it." With the reformers it was not so much a question of what one believed but in whom. Jesus became the only creed. This was a great contribution to faith.

Being able to see the result of binding deductions from the scriptures upon others, who could not concur, they carefully enunciated a policy which would eliminate much of the divisiveness resulting from such a course. The paragraph dealing with this is so trenchant and powerful as to bear repeating. "That although inferences and deductions from Scripture premises, when fairly inferred, may be truly called the doctrine of God's holy word, yet are they not formally binding upon the consciences of Christians further than they perceive the connection, and evidently see that they are so, for their faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Eventually it came to pass that the wall of separation between clergy and laity was broken down. God's people (*laos*) were seen as God's portion or lot (*kleros*). All of God's people eventually became clergymen. All of God's clergymen were seen as laity. It required no miter, cassock or surplice to immerse or to dispense the Lord's Supper. On the frontier, men who worked in the fields all day became the preachers and proclaimers of the Word at night and on Sunday. No ornate or elaborate cathedral was required. The ill-equipped frontier living-rooms became places of praise. Brush arbors were raised to shade from the sun's rays, schoolhouses dedicated to the task of informing minds became the place where hearts were touched.

The reformatory movement borrowed from any group of believers what was deemed scriptural, adopting it not because it was a denominational practice but because it was obviously authorized by the word of God. Their zeal for missions they received from Count Ludwig Zinzendorf and the Moravians in Bohemia; their weekly observance of the Lord's Supper from the Scotch Baptists. They were eager to examine anything and when they found it in the scriptures they adopted it. Soon the rivers and lakes of the new world were being used as baptistries as were those of the old.

Now, with two centuries gone by, it is high time for another reformation to come into existence. In this Space Age, communications have so developed that the truth may be trumpeted to the farthest reaches of the globe. Gone are the Machine Age and the Industrial Revolution. We are now in the Space Age. We have learned to overcome the pull of gravity and to soar into limitless space. The earth is being drawn closer together. The language barrier is disappearing. Indeed, there are already signs that we are approaching another great breakthrough of the Spirit. Renewal is the watchword of the faith. Renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power! Let it come!

THE END OF WAR

Integrity 2 (March-April 1989): 23, 24

(Reprint from *Integrity*, August 1970)

Integrity

“Then he came and told both you who were far from God and us who were near that the war was over” (Ephesians 2: 17).

There are some of us who can remember the excitement which burst upon our nation when the armistice was signed, bringing to a close the conflict which had been dubbed the First World War. Many more of us recall vividly the wild enthusiasm which greeted announcement of the cessation of hostilities in the next great international holocaust. There is something about the end of suffering and death created by “man’s inhumanity to man,” which touches the deepest wellspring of the human heart and conscience.

When Jesus entered the earth as the first space traveler to come as an ambassador of peace, the world was divided into two armed camps. Between them existed the deepest hostility, always smoldering and often bursting into consuming flame with fiery tongues curling out in every direction. On one side were the Jews, smug and complacent, confident that God belonged to them; on the opposite side were Gentiles, hating and being hated, worshiping gods whom they had invested with all of the frightful vices of a fallen humanity.

Some were near. Others were far off. There was no hope that ever the twain would meet. Each passing year intensified the bitterness, each day drove the virus of hate more deeply into human consciousness. The future was bleak and barren. Mercy had fled. Compassion hid her face. A black pall settled with ebon pinion, to brood over the surface of the globe as a malign force under whose wings violence could find shelter and wickedness be nurtured.

THEN HE CAME! These three little words changed the destiny of mankind. It was as if history, appalled by the tragedy of the past, halted for breath and catching new vision began anew the onward march and the upward climb. A new calendar was created and from henceforth time would be dated from when he came. His message was the greatest good news ever brought to a world writhing in misery and agony of sin. **THE WAR WAS OVER.**

I doubt that any of us would limit the effect of his announcement merely to those who were fortunate enough to enter the stream of time when he lived in the flesh. Nor would we assume that the impact of his coming would be confined by such rock-ribbed words as Jew and Gentile. These embraced all humanity in that day. Whatever was done for them as representatives of mankind will affect the whole universe of man. We must try to understand the implications on a catholic scale of what is meant by the war being over.

1. It certainly means that the myth of the superiority of one people over another must be laid away and forgotten. This basis of many of our modern wars is ridiculous in the full light of his advent. No longer can a man demand special consideration because Abraham was his father. God is able of the very stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

2. It means that narrow nationalism has no place in the thought of his disciples. Although we may be Americans by the

circumstances of birth, governed by time and place; the new birth introduced us into a relationship which transcends the boundaries of state and nation. It was this which prompted John Wesley to say, "The world is my parish." It was this which impelled Adoniram Judson to turn his back upon his native land and become the first American missionary to carry the glad tidings to Rangoon, on Burma's "Golden Shore."

3. It means the end of racial prejudice, that heady elixir concocted in the distillery of hell, and dispensed by the agents of Satan, to benumb the sensibilities and make hate seem like love and darkness appear as light. Such prejudice in its many aspects is like the dragon's teeth sowed and plowed under by Jason, then springing up as armed men brandishing their weapons, ing upon one another and continuing their senseless fighting until all lay prostrate in death.

4. The end of the war betokens the termination of the struggle over law and legalistic precepts as a means for justification. He came to reveal the futility of human wisdom among Gentiles and the frailty of legalistic hope among Jews.

5. It means the end of boasting over human achievement and earthly attainment. The rivalry which fuel the of conflict was stifled, the fuel made incombustible and the fire extinguished by the crimson fountain. "Then he came... the war was over."

Why is it that we are still in grave difficulty? The answer is very simple. A lot of people do not know that the war is over. It is not that they do not know that Jesus has come. But they have not listened to what he said. News of the surrender of Robert E. Lee was slow in reaching remote areas. Many of these men continued fighting for several weeks, brother ing brother as if no truce had been signed. They had not received the message.

All of us are acquainted with those who continue to live as if Jesus had never come. They foster all of the pre-Christian

attitudes. They maintain the hopeless struggle to which the cross wrote 'finis.' They are victims of the same arrogance and pride, guilty of bigotry and tolerance, saturated with racial hate. They pay little attention to grace and walk in the bitterness that is engendered by legalism.

Nothing is more important than that we exhibit by our lives and conduct a firm conviction that old things have passed away and all things have become new. The war is over. Let us cease the clash of sabers, the rattle of musketry, the raucous cries, the noise and din of battle. The war is over! Let us rejoice and be glad.

A HOPE-FULL FUTURE

Integrity 3 (May-June 1989): 49-51

Integrity

It was Julius Caesar who said, “Men in general are fain to believe that which they wish to be true.” Despite that statement which I recognize as correct, I must admit that I am a born optimist. This means holding in proper perspective both the past and the present. It also entails gazing into the future with a clear vision.

I believe with David that “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof.” And I do not believe that God is through with the earth, and ready to wrap it up as a shroud. Of course, I am not unaware of the problems: pornography, homosexuality, abortion, and a host of others. These are not really problems of the earth, but of the United States. We are aware of them because we live here. Our republic has lasted longer than any in history, and the dregs we have created are in a stinking heap. But we overlook the forces for good which are among us.

I am conscious of the fact that God may end everything in a moment or at the twinkling of an eye. He will not consult me. But I believe He is not through with the world. And I personally believe that, in spite of the fulminations from the pulpit, that we are living in one of the greatest ages in time. I am glad to be alive today, and I am happy to be a part of this era. Let me tell you why I believe it is not a time of sadness or repining, but a time of rejoicing. I shall list seven things. I could mention a dozen or

more.

1. The Roman Catholic Church is coming apart at the seams. In our own city, which has been a bulwark of Catholicism from pioneer days, there are differences showing up which are irremediable. Seminaries are closing because of non-attendance, public protests are being offered, nuns are in rebellion. I see no possibility of repairing all of the breaks. Many people are quitting the Catholic religion. Some are affiliating with evangelical churches. Others just stay home. A few years ago the Catholic Church ruled the world. Now it cannot even control itself. Although what I say may be disputed by some, and angrily denied by others, it is my conviction that it is true. I feel it is to the good of humanity, because the Catholic church's hierarchical structure has exercised a deleterious influence upon those who want to be more free and open.

2. Jews are accepting the Lordship of Jesus as never before. Under the leadership of Moishe Rosen and Jews for Jesus, the Christ is being proclaimed to Jews throughout the world. I am a speaker at the Messianic Forum. It began the day Israel started. It meets once per week for luncheon. I meet many converted Jews and have contact with many more. The method of working with them must differ. But this, and other forums, attract a number of individuals. What a difference than when I used to go to the Reformed Synagogue every Friday evening, and when I taught once per week under the keen eye of a watchful rabbi.

3. The Koreans and other peoples of the Far East are fast moving into the Christian camp. The largest church on earth is in Seoul, South Korea. It was begun by Paul Yong-hi Cho, whom I have met. I asked him what built the work so magnificently. He answered in one word: "Prayer." A preacher who is a dear friend of mine visited there in Korea. He was asked to preach at 2:00 a.m. on Friday night. He expected a dozen sleepy-eyed elderly folk. When he arrived, there were more than 5,000

milling around, and that many more, who had been praying from one o'clock, also came out. All night Friday prayer is held. There are almost 500,000 members of the congregation. They assemble in 50,000 homes in the area. Dr. Cho is planning to win ten million Japanese to the Lord by 2000 A.D.

4. The Chinese Mainland, with the largest population in the whole world, is seething with faith in Jesus. Recently I saw on television a portrayal of the visit by Billy Graham to China. He spoke at numerous places and the outstanding thing about his visit was the number of bright-eyed and attentive young people and students. Every hall was packed. I rejoiced that these people heard about Jesus from a spokesman so powerful and literate.

The land of China is having more Bibles printed than ever before. I stayed with a man for a week who smuggled Bibles into China from Hong Kong. That was several years back. Now, the Word is being printed and circulated in that very land. God be praised! Many of the Chinese have taken English as a second language. There are thousands of house churches in Shanghai alone. The Word has wings. It will spread through the country rapidly and one of these days China may belong to the Prince of peace.

5. I never believed I would live to see what is happening in Russia and her satellites. But let us face it. Communism has proven to be a dud. It is a wash-out. The people have been misled and deceived by this unfortunate theory. It cannot even produce enough food to feed them. Disillusioned, unhappy, filled with longing, they are turning from it. Russia may yet become a republic. I feel a deep sense of concern for those who have met in the deep woods to pray and remember Jesus.

Now, under perestroika, they are taking steps they never took before. At this very time, young people are in Louis becoming acquainted with American ways. I know the family

where three of them are staying. Soon Americans will be going over there, to learn Russian ways. This is the first step toward a wider circulation of the Good News. At Amsterdam, I heard the prelates of the Russian Orthodox Church speak. They had no idea that Jesus would break through and affect the mentality as He has. There is no stopping one who could not be retained by death!

6. The young people of our day are marvelous to contemplate. I am fully aware that many who are my age (past eighty) see only the evil of youth. But I know better. And one of these days we shall conquer. Some of you will recall that for ten years I worked reaching “hippies” and recruiting scores of them. I spoke in 310 colleges of every kind and description from Swedish Lutheran to some which had no commitment. I believed then, as I believe now, that the future lay with the youth. I rejoice to see them serving God faithfully and truly, and they are doing so in every community. The future lies in their hands.

7. I do not want to be misunderstood in this last thing. I speak of the Charismatic Movement. I am not Charismatic. I do not intend to become so. But looking at it from a distance I am convinced that it has led a lot of people to accept Jesus who were living in and practicing dire sin. I was in California when the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Association was started. I know its founder. I have spoken with him several times. It was his idea to start a movement which would reach all over the world. He has been successful.

There are congregations of 5000 or more meeting all over the earth today. They are charismatic. The good news of Jesus shines through all of the gimmickry, and in some cases, chicanery. I am glad that it is such a powerful thing that nothing can keep it down forever. Meanwhile, I am teaching in the inner city and the country. When someone comes who wants to talk about his “experiences” I listen to him patiently. When he is through I do not enter into an argument or discussion with him.

I simply go on teaching the Word of life. It has taken me years to learn to do that. I'm glad I learned.

What does all of this mean? It means that I am older and wiser than I once was. It also means that my faith has grown perceptibly. I believe that the God of glory is getting ready to do a mighty and wonderful work on earth. I am convinced that sectarianism will decline. I am persuaded that truth will predominate. I believe we are facing a day in which "our" church will mean less to everyone and there will be "one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling." And all of us shall become part of the "multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues" which shall stand before the throne.

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by W. Carl Ketcherside

Journals

The following essays were originally published in *Ensign*, edited by R. L. (Pat) Kilpatrick, of Huntsville, Alabama, from 1977 through 1989. At the time of this writing, all issues of *Ensign* may be found on the website of archive.org.

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Satisfying Myths

Ensign 12 (April 1977): 7

Ensign

It is difficult to face reality and to make the changes it always requires. Change is never easy but is inevitable if one is realistic.

Man is comfortable with myths. This is especially true if they flatter him, give him a sense of security, and make it unnecessary to face further critical examination of his ideas. It is difficult to face reality and to make the changes it always requires. Change is never easy but is inevitable if one is realistic. There is built into us an inborn aversion to change. We do not want to be disturbed. We do not want the nest stirred up. We resent challenge of things as they are and have been by those who prod us into considering what they ought to be and could become. We do not want to be “tormented before our time” as some fairly contented demons put it when confronted by Christ.

Although any amendment of thought is resisted and stifled, perhaps in no other area of existence is change made so reluctantly as in that of religious convictions. This is good because it is a tribute to the depth and power of spiritual thought. We may be grateful to a beneficent Creator who constructed us with such a devotion to faith that it grips us even when that in which we trust is without genuine basis of fact.

Every religious party on earth which owes its existence to

courageous reformation reaches a plateau where it bitterly decries further reformation. It regards every attempt at ongoing reform as denying the faith. It brands as heresy every questioning of the status quo. Like wine resting on its lees it settles down unrippled and unquestioning. It wants to remain that way. There must be no fermentation of thought, no fresh winds blowing across the surface. This should probably create caution which would forbid my writing as I shall in this little article, but I love truth more than acclaim. I am committed to it even though it rips my idols from their pedestal and flings me broken and contrite before the Throne of God.

The saints with whom I am more closely identified have operated under a myth for many decades. For many years I accepted that myth as reality. I proclaimed and sought to defend it. That myth consists of an assumption that the Church of Christ as listed in the United States Census is identical with the body of Christ, and is exclusively and entirely, positively and positionally, the one holy, catholic and apostolic church of God upon earth, a claim made by no other organization except that one whose headquarters are in the Vatican in Rome. Our brethren, rather arrogantly I think, adorn the cornerstones of their temples made with men's hands with the chiseled inscription— Church of Christ, Established 33 A.D.

The fact is that we are the crystallization of a historic movement launched by thoughtful Presbyterians and others, about J 809, as “a project to unite the Christians in all of the sects.” When it became obvious they did not all want to be united by us or with us, we were left with those who dreamed of restoring the ancient order of things. We banded them together to express their worship to God, and created another party in the same communities where we had sought to unite all who loved the common Lord. It was not long until those who came into the movement began to regard as enemies and aliens those who did not, so the party was denominated Church of Christ to distinguish its adherents from those whose signboards bore

other designations and denominations.

But the body of Christ is composed of every saved person upon this earth. Not one such person is outside of it. They are not all in our corral nor any other corral constructed by men in an attempt to reproduce the one body. The fellowship of the Spirit, like the body of Christ, embraces every individual who is in union with God through faith in the Son, which is validated by obedience. Wherever my Father has a child, there I have a brother or sister and I sigh for that day when we can openly manifest and demonstrate it in the unity of the Spirit. I shall not deny the existence of that unity merely because of our temporary inability to show it forth in our fragmented condition.

Pentecost was the birthday of the one body. The family of God was gathered and congregated and given being on that day. But we must never forget that it would have existed if there had never been a restoration movement.

It was not the birth of Thomas or Alexander Campbell but the death of Jesus which gave us room for hope. The family of God is greater than any movement within it.

The Changing Clergy

Ensign (August 1977): 5

Ensign

The changing mind is a symbol of growth when it represents an honest struggle toward apprehension of greater truth. One cannot scale a mountain height while remaining in base camp. The preacher who boasts that he has not changed in twenty years does not thereby proclaim his steadfastness of faith. He simply testifies that he is as ignorant today as he was two decades ago. Too many of us think we are walking in the old paths when we are wallowing in the old ruts.

All of us approve of change when it leads someone to accept our thinking. We are all thrilled that Thomas and Alexander Campbell were led out of the Presbyterian Church and driven out of the Baptist Church. We had better be for if they had not been “the restoration movement” might have left us “Christian Baptists” instead of the only Christians in this sad world. We deplore any change which leads men from us. No “honest” man ever leaves one of our parties to affiliate with another. Those who do so are all wishy-washy, greedy for more money, seeking worldly honor, or muddled in their thinking. Only heretics and apostates go-over-the-hill from us!

When a prominent figure leaves us it is God’s way of purging the body, protecting the truth and saving us from digression. It is “good riddance of bad rubbish,” even though he may be godly, profound in knowledge and consecrated to the

service of the Lord. We never accept or accumulate any “rubbish” from others. If a man from another group who has been a misfit, and who has had trouble with his wife as well as every congregation whose support he has accepted for years, suddenly decides to leave and become “one of us” he is immediately translated into “a successful and outstanding minister” whose integrity has forced him to examine and approve our plea.

Someone who gets word of his unhappiness puts in a call to one of our secret agents who specializes in “trans-sectual” operations and he flies halfway across the country, convinces him that he is wrong about the use of instrumental music, and welcomes into the fold of the faithful, while starting out to arrange for his financial support as assistant to the minister of one of our “loyal churches.” I am quite convinced that a lot of sincere brethren join us because they can no longer remain where they are and be honest, and I am just as convinced a lot of them leave us for the same reason. The latter do it on their own as other groups are not sectarian enough to keep “watchdogs of heresy” to track down the disgruntled.

It is a kind of left-handed testimony to our sectarian spirit that our journals publicize any clergyman who takes up with us after having received our purification treatment and Good Housekeeping seal of approval. He gets his picture in the paper accompanied by an encomium which probably makes those whom he left wonder if it is the same man. Why not put in a picture of every person who leaves where he is and takes up with us? If God is no respecter of persons can we assume that the angels of heaven have a bigger celebration when a preacher comes over with a promised job than when someone who operates a service-station in Georgia loses his job because he switched to what a lot of people ingloriously refer to as “the Campbellites”? Of course, the angels in heaven may not read our papers. If not, they will be like a lot of subscribers on earth who never read them either.

To be fair, why not publish a list of those preachers among us who leave “the Lord’s church” and head over to Christian Church and Disciples of Christ pastures? It might surprise you to learn that the list would probably be the larger of the two. I do not expect to see any photographs in “The Old Reliable” under the caption “Converted to Christian Church.” I commend the editors of Christian Standard and The Disciple for making no sectarian demonstration when someone crosses the line.

It is time to quit waving scalps on our sectarian clothesline. Whenever a sincere child of God decides he can best serve unto the glory of the Father and the blessing of his fellowman he is my brother. I will differ with him on his opinions and interpretations like I do with those of the saints among whom I labor. But I will not “set at nought a brother” and I will continue to hope that God will receive us both when we arrive at the gates of glory! One is no more my brother after he changes his mind about the validity of instrumental music, the millennium, or the support of Herald of Truth, than he was before, and if he never changes his mind he will still be my brother.

We are not made children of God by bowing before a partisan totem-pole but by kneeling at the cross of Calvary in humble submission and obedience to the will of the Father.

Our Historic Roots

Ensign 5 (September 1977): 7

Ensign

In *Firm Foundation*, June 7, appears an editorial by our brother in the Lord, Reuel Lemmons, under the heading “Hope for Calvinism.” The opening sentence reads: “Presbyterians, Baptists, the churches of Christ and several other religious orders have their historic roots in Calvinism.” The gist of the article is that all of these have recurring struggles with what our brother calls “the faith-grace problem.” Brother Lemmons affirms that “all denominational lines are forged in the fires of revolution” and while he avoids the use of “denominational lines” when applied to ourselves he admits that “opposition to the Calvinistic error of the day” may have helped to influence the position we took.

He is encouraged by the fact that John R. Rice, Jerry Falwell, and some other Baptist preachers, as well as most Presbyterians, have given up hyper-Calvinism. He regards this as “a step toward unity” and points out that those mentioned in his first sentence, together with some Holiness groups, have the same basic stance. He states that their chief differences center around the five points of hyper-Calvinism, and it seems that faith in Calvinism is beginning to crumble.

The impact of this article could be tremendous. If I had written it I am sure it would have been branded “rank heresy.” It is better that it be produced by the pen of our good brother

and that it appear in the pages of Firm Foundation from which I am barred. The articles I have submitted, regardless of their theme, have all been returned with a note from Brother Lemmons that his publication of them would make it appear that he endorses or condones my “error” with regard to fellowship with all of God’s children. I may be wrong, but I rather suspect that he is more afraid of some of his other writers and their reaction, than he is of my position.

It is refreshing for one among us to admit that churches of Christ have historic roots. Most brethren think our “religious order” began as such upon Pentecost. They point to the legends carved upon the cornerstones of their communal structures as proof of it. To point out that we are heirs of a frontier movement with roots in the same “ism” as Presbyterians and Baptists will be a distinct shock to many. It could result in a degree of honesty we have not been free to exhibit for more than a century since we waved a magic wand and transformed a historic movement begun by noble Presbyterians and others into “the Lord’s church” as begun by the Spirit through the holy apostles and prophets.

Many of those who became a part of the restoration ideal remained Calvinists all of their lives. But they no longer made their opinions on the five points a test of fellowship. Unity in Christ, rather than in understanding of doctrinal matters, became their watchword. When Aylett Raines, a young man from the Restorationists (a sect of Universalists) was immersed for the remission of sins, there were those who questioned whether he should be received as long as he held what to them appeared to be such unscriptural views.

The matter was introduced into a public meeting. Thomas Campbell arose and deplored the introduction of such a question. He said that he and Brother Raines had been together for several months and had “fully unbosomed ourselves to each other.” Then he added, “He is philosophically a Restorationist

and I am a Calvinist, but notwithstanding this difference of opinion between us, I would put my right hand into the fire and have it burned off, before I would hold up my hand against him.”

Alexander Campbell declared that the moment a person believes that Jesus the Nazarene is the Messiah, and is baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he becomes a disciple—

“. . . and whether he believes the five points condemned, or the five points approved, by the Synod of Dort, is not so much as to be asked of him; whether he holds any of the views of the Calvinists or Arminians, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, or Quakers, is never once to be asked of such persons, in order to admission into the Christian community called the church.”

Contrast that magnanimous, gracious and unsectarian attitude with the modern rule and regulation which will not allow a consecrated brother from the Christian Church to “place membership” without coming to the front and confessing his “sin” in previously attending where the instrument has been employed. We not only ask individuals about their opinions concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, the millennium, cups, classes or colleges, but if they do not give the orthodox answer we debar and drive them from among us. We ought to be ashamed to live and afraid to die!

If a man is immersed upon the basis of his faith in Jesus Christ, he is welcome where I am in spite of his private opinions carried over from his previous sectarian alliance. The way to help rid the world of sects is to rid ourselves of the sectarian spirit. And the way to do that is to receive all of God’s children as our brethren regardless of who they are and where they are. Brother Lemmons will spark thought. I pray the spark will not be extinguished by cold water thrown upon it by some of the

brethren.

The Perils of Thinking

Ensign 8 (December 1977): 9

Ensign

A great many sincere people among us have lived with honest doubts for a long time. It has been difficult for them to understand how a movement launched by clear-thinking Presbyterians in the early nineteenth century could suddenly be caught up in the hands of the Almighty and transformed into the one body for which His Son shed His blood. Our rational powers do not die easily, and in spite of a continual barrage of diatribe from the pulpit and in the party journals, a goodly number have gone along thinking we may not have all the saved in one of our divergent corrals, and that we may even have some in them who will not make it in “the great round-up in the sky.”

It pampers the pride of people to think that they are “favorites of God” and are the only ones who have discovered the truth. Given the right signboard in front of the meetinghouse and the imprimatur of the “somewhats” in a partisan Jerusalem, most folks can freely indulge in the kind of satisfaction which wells up in prayers beginning with, “Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are.” We seldom stop to realize that such an attitude is more sectarian than that of many whom we blast as sectarians.

Fortunately, most of us are better than our unwritten creeds. The heart treasures thoughts which the lips do not express. If every young preacher in the two dozen parties which

designate themselves “Churches of Christ” could screw up enough courage to get up on a Sunday morning and divulge his real feelings about fellowship there would be a “stirring in the mulberry trees” such as has not been seen since Martin Luther stood up in the Diet at Worms and exclaimed, “Here I stand! I can do no other!”

The fact is that there is a silent revolution against the enforced conformity which demands abject obeisance to traditional and inherited positions which have no validity in the sacred scriptures and which do not make good sense. Men are tired of parroting cliches, repeating slogans, and employing sermon outlines which are as empty and devoid of content today as when first hatched out in a mental incubator by someone called to “fill in the time.” They are sick of a System which baptizes people into its ranks, only to find they are devoid of the Spirit, and filled with such works of the flesh as envy, hatred, strife, and the factional spirit.

It is tragic indeed that the most dangerous thing one can do in many places is to think out loud. One who does so will be attacked in pulpit and in press. He will be branded a heretic and hounded wherever he goes. It takes one of strong character and deep devotion to God’s cause to lift his voice above the sounding brass and clanging cymbals and point out that love is the only dynamic which will validate every gift and sanctify every sacrifice. It requires no thought for a blind mule at a sorghum mill to make his weary round. Originality is not needed by one on a treadmill. He is not going anywhere and after a lifetime of such activity he can only get off where he got on. There are many who confuse wallowing in the old ruts with walking in the old paths!

It is true that one does not always express himself openly and deep down inside the vault of the heart there may be treasured thoughts which are never brought to the surface in a Sunday school class. More and more as I talk about the unity of

the Spirit, someone will say, “You are verbalizing what I have been thinking for a long time.” Or, “You have put my thoughts into words better than I could have done it myself.” There is hope so long as men and women keep thinking in spite of the threats from the establishment!

Discrediting Learners

Ensign 9 (January 1978): 9

Ensign

Have you ever noticed that the “religious establishment” never gives credit to one who leaves its narrow and restricted confines for honestly thinking himself out of its barbed-wire enclosure? Regardless of what faction it may be, if a preacher gets fed up and can no longer “tiptoe through the partisan tulips” he is blacklisted and the partisan guns are trained on him. Whether in politics or religion (and sometimes they are the same) it is never conceded that one simply learned too much and could no longer stomach the kind of legalistic maneuvering to which he had been subjected.

Of course, if one leaves the Baptist fold and joins up with us, he is always a profound scholar, a devoted student of the Word and a brilliant thinker. We never picked up a mediocre Baptist in our history. Anyone who leaves where he is and comes to where we are is always fleeing from Babylon and finding refuge in “the land of corn and wine” (unfermented). But once he pitches his tent within one of our party confines he must stay there or be attacked by the very ones who welcomed him. The hands which were extended in warmth will pick up cold stones to hurl with hate and venom.

Any person who switches parties among us does so from an ulterior motive. He has grown soft and unsound as he grew older. He is looking for more money and is willing to sell his soul

for earthly gain. He has been brainwashed by the clever writing of someone who is neo-Calvinistic or has some other theological “bee in his bonnet.” He has never really been sound but has been uttering strange things about grace for several years and has aroused suspicion in the minds of the faithful brethren for a long time.

No one ever studies his way out from among us. If we have the truth, how can anyone learn anything new without forsaking the truth? To leave the party is to desert the truth! The peculiar thing is that we have two dozen different parties in the restoration movement and each one of these has the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. We have that many “ways that are right and cannot be wrong.” It is funny when you sit down and think it through, that everyone of our parties thinks all of the others are off the beam, and they are all correct! They can all agree that all except themselves are haywire and this is the one place they are not mistaken!

If one who has been a prominent figure in a group which opposes a certain method of financing a television series, decides it is not worthy of all the hullaballo it has engendered, and that from now on he will preach Christ and him crucified, and not continue to write or say inflammatory thoughts about the issue, he will literally be driven out. No one ever grows in grace and knowledge of the truth in our day. Instead, he “joins the liberals” or becomes an apostate by suggesting that the hassle over individual cups may not be as important as it has been made to appear.

There are hungry preachers who would gladly eat with their brethren in the meetinghouse if they knew they would not be attacked for “denying the faith” and crucifying the Son of God afresh. But if they sat down and had a peanut butter sandwich and a cup of Folger’s coffee with the saints who have no qualm about having a coffee urn in “the church building” word would go out over the factional grapevine that they had

gone modern, sold out to Satan and were in “the gall of bitterness.”

All of this presents some problems to those who want to know how one can still love those with whom he has always been associated and work with those with whom he has not. It is no problem to me. I simply outgrew all of our parties. I also outgrew those of anyone else. I do not belong to any of them. I belong only to Jesus. I thought myself out of schools of thought. I now have but one Lord and He is in heaven seated at the right hand of God. I am free to listen to anyone, free to speak to anyone, free to go any place and free to stay at home if I prefer.

Any person who tries to play ball in our partisan situation will be like a sparrow caught in a badminton game. He will be batted back and forth all over the lot! How fortunate it is to be free of the whole sordid experience of trying to please men instead of God!

Confusion of Tongues

Ensign 10 (February 1978): 5

Ensign

Every sect in history has been known for its manipulation of language. The corruption of this medium of exchange in the realm of thought is as dangerous as the counterfeiting of coinage in the realm of economics. It undermines soundness and creates false values. To use another metaphor, it poisons the spring out of which all of us must drink. When the restoration movement gravitated toward sectarianism, in an attempt to protect its gains and to freeze thought to prevent its own reformation, it began the dubious practice of altering words to be used as tools to build the walls of separation higher. Such confusion of tongues postpones the day when believers in the claims of Jesus can be united by guaranteeing that even when men speak the same things they do not mean the same thing.

Take, for example, the term “faithful preacher of the gospel.” It no longer means what it would have meant in the days of Paul. Nor does it have a great deal to do with the proclamation of that Message, the good news about the Messiah. It generally refers to one who consistently parrots the party line. One who is considered faithful by one group will be branded as a heretic by another group meeting a few miles away. To be faithful has little to do with relationship to Jesus. It designates the way one is regarded by the members of an exclusive sect. If the sect is opposed to institutional orphan homes one who does not concur is not faithful, but all he needs to do is to switch

parties and he will then become faithful. One can be unfaithful in the morning and suddenly become faithful that night merely by “placing membership” in a group which agrees with his position on “the issues.”

Then there is the word “heresy” which is tossed around so freely and loosely in our day. In the days of the apostles it simply referred to a sect, and in the Revised Standard Version the original is aptly translated by “party spirit.” The idea that it means an opinion or doctrine held in contradiction to the orthodox or official doctrine of the church was tacked on to it by the hoary Mother on the Tiber as a justification for burning dissidents or cutting their heads off.

Since the sectarian spirit is always the same whether in Naples, Rome, Geneva or Nashville, the convenient concept was appropriated by others who wished to harass those who questioned the status quo. Now it has come to pass that every person in the Churches of Christ is a heretic to someone else. In fact if you want to accept the combined testimony of all the factions you would have to conclude that “the Lord’s church” is composed only of heretics and no one else. A heretic in the thinking of about everyone in this segment of the religious world is someone who disagrees with you.

It is little wonder that when Alexander Campbell wrote an article entitled “Synopsis for Reformation” his first point was the recovery of the vocabulary of the Spirit. This requires not only the speaking where the Bible speaks but speaking as it speaks. If I maul and manhandle the words of scripture until they mean something other than they originally meant, I conceal rather than reveal the true meaning. I do not want to seem too critical but I charge that our brethren have attached a forced and fallacious meaning to almost every prominent scriptural term. Words like grace, worship, communion, etc., have been accorded arbitrary meanings which mislead and confuse humble followers of the Lamb.

It would be a real blessing if we would quit associating a particular position on some of the troublesome “issues” with apostasy. Such association may be more damaging than the wrong position on an issue!

The Power Struggle

Ensign 12 (April 1978): 5

Ensign

One does not need to be especially astute to learn that what our brethren refer to as “the Lord’s church” is in a sorry state. Letters have gone out and articles have been printed to warn that whereas we enjoyed the smiles of heaven for a brief period and became the fastest growing church in America, we have now been toppled from the pinnacle and plunged to 12th place. This means there are eleven other sects now enjoying greater popularity than our own. When we were “top dog” upon the score chart, the Lord was blessing us. Now Satan is working overtime to push others of his own choice to the forefront. Any time anyone passes us it is Satan in the saddle and the Lord is in deep trouble.

While various reasons for our tumble from the summit are given by brotherhood “odds-makers” it could be that Brother Reuel Lemmons has found the contaminated spring from which we have been drinking, causing us to have the shakes and weak trembles. In an editorial in *Firm Foundation*, for January 31, our good brother expresses the idea that authoritative and power-hungry elders have made a shambles of the cause. He makes the sweeping statement that “practically every congregation in the brotherhood has split at least once, and many more than once.” He affirms; “We believe that a little research would establish that practically all congregational troubles and most of our preacher firings and quittings are the

result of power struggles, and that most of them are precipitated by ‘ruling’ elders.”

He also said he did not realize as late as last summer that “conditions were as sick as they are.” To illustrate how sick they are, one Tennessee brother wrote that his elders had withdrawn from him, and notified him that before they would even talk to him, he “would have to go before the church and make a public confession, and say that Reuel Lemmons was teaching a false doctrine.” It is now apparent that Lemmonism is going to join what a lot of rabid fans of Brother Lemmons have been wont to call “Ketcherside-ism.” Now anyone who accepts “Lemmons-aid” in his explanations will be tossed out of the synagogue by the Pharisees. Brother Lemmons prays, “Oh, God, deliver us from knuckleheadedness!” That is the way I used to feel when he wrote me up without knowing what I was really saying about fellowship.

I want to make a few suggestions. Things may not be as bad as they seem. There is no real reason for equating “the brotherhood” with the body of our precious Lord. The brotherhood is composed of those who are legal heirs of a project launched by sincere Presbyterians and others, to unite the Christians in all of the sects. It is not now and never has been the church which God purchased with the blood of His own. The project failed miserably. Not only did it not unite the Christians in all of the sects but now “practically every congregation in the brotherhood has split at least once, and many more than once.” But this does not mean that the church of God is fractured and fragmented.

It is still composed of every saved person on this earth. All of them possess the Spirit of God. He lives in them and abides in them. They are one in the Spirit, they are one in the Lord! They never have trusted in elders as the hope of their righteousness. They have not trusted in preachers much either, and it is a good thing. Their hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and

righteousness. The family of God is bigger than any movement in it, and that includes the restoration movement.

I doubt that authoritarian elders will affect the church of the living God too seriously. Throwing a pebble in a creek does not create a tidal wave in the ocean, even if the creek is a tributary to the ocean. Elders in congregations may get drunk with sight of power, and bruise and batter some of the saints. But persecution never really weakens, whether it is perpetrated by the pope Rome injudiciously created, or by some of the lesser ones who have been cranked out by our System.

I am happy and hopeful because I no longer pin my hopes on the rise and fall of a religious party on the popularity scale. I am not the least bit interested in where we appear in the religious Dow Jones averages. Let those who have invested their hopes on the sectarian stock market keep track of our ratings. I have been delivered from that whole ball of wax. I belong only to Jesus. Whatever happens to systems, sects, parties and platforms does not disturb me. I am His and He is mine! Praise His name!

The Shattered Dream

Ensign 1 (May 1978): 7

Ensign

Reuel Lemmons is my brother in Christ. He is editor of *Firm Foundation*, a journal from which my articles are debarred. This does not keep me from reading avidly the literary contributions of those who are acceptable. Among the articles none are more trenchant than the articles of Brother Lemmons. His pertinent pen has made the paper an articulate medium for the restoration movement establishment which developed out of the earnest efforts of Thomas and Alexander Campbell and Barton Warren Stone who launched it while still enveloped in the garments of their Presbyterian childhood.

In a poignant, and almost impassioned editorial in the February issue of his paper, our brother writes of the dream of the pioneers. He declares that, "It had a passion for freedom—freedom from religious overlords and the shackles of creeds." Then he admits that, "The dream is now shattered. We have awakened to find the fallout poisonous. A dream to end all division has ended in more division. A dream to reject all creeds but Christ resulted in scores of private creeds, each with its handful of 'loyal brethren'."

Brother Lemmons is much more adept at seeing the problem than in providing the answer. This is because he is still part of the problem. He can describe the knot but cannot undo the snarl. I would like to make a few suggestions here I would

prefer to make in the pages of the Firm Foundation. I can make them here because the editor is not afraid to provide his readers with viewpoints which challenge the whole mess which has fermented into “Church of Christism.” This is what Brother Lemmons means by “scores of private creeds,” a term much more pleasing to the ears of the establishment because all can disclaim guilt while pointing the finger at others.

1. Let us renounce the frightful error into which we tumbled when we began to equate a movement begun by thoughtful pioneers with the church of the living God purchased by the blood of His Son. The restoration movement is no more “the Lord’s church” than a prescription given me by physicians to correct my ills is my body. The body of Christ is composed of every saved person on this earth. Every person baptized under the impact of the One Spirit has been baptized into the body. To our shame and disgrace the baptized believers are fractured, fragmented and factionalized.

In this condition they are not all behind any one signboard regardless of what denomination or title appears upon it. Let us as “a prelude to the future” begin by recognizing our brothers and sisters wherever they are upon the earth. We are one with every child of God. Let us cease to think about uniting sects, churches, parties, and positions, and begin to think about uniting Christians! That was the dream of the pioneers and I can prove it by the pioneers themselves.

2. Let us candidly admit that we were in error when we allowed the position we hold upon the use of instrumental music to be made a test of fellowship. It is not wrong for us to hold the opinion that instrumental music has no rightful place in the expression of corporate praise. It is not wrong to continue to debar it from our places of assembly. But it is a sin to make our view a test of union or communion, and judge those as being unworthy of fellowship who disagree with us. We must go back to the first split and heal the wound it caused or we will continue

to be a divided people. Acknowledging that we were wrong in dividing does not mean we condone the use of instruments. It simply means we recognize as God's children those who do, whether they are right or wrong.

3. Let us acknowledge that oneness is in Christ and not in conformity upon matters of opinion. We should honestly strive to see everything alike but we are one while we are striving. It is foolish to make our view of a certain area of dissidence greater than our unity in Him who died that we all might live. It does no honor to Jesus for those who are in Him to come unglued and debate vigorously, as warring tribes, those areas upon which they do not all see alike.

We think it is time for Brother Lemmons, and scores of others like him, to acknowledge that the only unity available to those who think for themselves is unity in diversity. If it takes courage for this, let him demonstrate this courage while he lives. Our brother writes, "A sort of despair seems to have set in." He can remove much of it by coming out for community in Christ rather than conformity in the conventional.

The Pioneer Rule

Ensign 2 (June 1978): 8

Ensign

There was a rule about which Alexander Campbell waxed especially eloquent. He wrote: “It deserves to be written in characters of gold upon the walls of every man’s study, upon the door of every place of instruction, and inscribed upon the title page of every book.”¹ In another sentence, he said about the same rule: “We have learned one lesson of great importance in the pursuit of truth; one that acts as a pioneer to prepare the way to knowledge—one that cannot be adopted and acted upon, but the result must be salutary.”²

It is evident that Campbell set great store by this forerunner of knowledge, because he urged his readers to familiarize themselves with it. “Reader, commit this rule to memory, and treasure it in your heart, if you would have the assurance of certainty in your conclusions, and the consciousness of the divine approbation of your conduct.”³ What is the rule to which such respect should be paid? Here is the direct quotation from Campbell.

“It is this: Never to hold any sentiment or proposition as more certain than the evidence upon which it rests; or, in other words, that our assent to any proposition should be precisely proportioned to the evidence on which it rests.”⁴

I must confess that when I became familiar with this

“golden rule” of interpretation some twenty-five years ago, it completely changed my approach to the implementation of revealed truth. It dawned upon me that the heavier the emphasis upon secondary or subservient matters, even though they may be true, the less power will be given to promote primary and foundational truths.

I suspect neglect of this rule is at the root of most sectarian and partisan establishments, including our own. I now know men and women in many sectarian alignments and I find them as sincere and earnest in the quest for truth as I deem myself to be. But they, like ourselves, believe they have discovered neglected and forsaken truths, and in order to protect and preserve them, they build walls around them and cluster inside those walls to defend them, and to segregate themselves from others who have either not found the same items, or do not deem them of sufficient importance to break the ties of family fellowship.

As I look at my own life I am fully aware that I hold as true most of the propositions to which I formerly gave assent. But I can now see that the reasoning by which I attained to my conclusions is not as clear and apparent to others as it is to me. Nor is the weight of evidence as strong in support of some of these matters as it is for the truths which are more vital to our relationship in Christ Jesus. Some of the things which are dear to me are the result of my own deduction from scripture, while others have been deduced by other investigators of revelation. But they are deductions. They must not be bound upon others further than they can see them for themselves. They must never to made tests of union or communion.

Campbell wrote about his significant rule: “Let the amount of evidence be the measure of our confidence, and we will be more careful in forming and more modest in expressing our opinions; our zeal and our knowledge would not be so disproportioned; and at the same time, we would not be wanting

in zeal for the truth, which alone can justly claim our reverence, and command our obedience.”

That was written July 4, 1823, and although more than a century and a half has passed into history since it was penned, I still read it with deep appreciation. If I am “more modest in expressing my opinions” it is not a sign of growing weakness in the faith, but an indication of the kind of maturity which manifests itself in the ability to “distinguish between that which differs.”

END NOTES

1. The Christian Baptist, Seven Volumes in One, p. 3. footnote.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

Freedom From Formal Creeds

Ensign 5 (September 1978): 7

Ensign

On Thursday morning, November 30, 1843, at 10:00 o'clock, Alexander Campbell and N. L. Rice began their debate on human creeds as bonds of union and communion. That debate could not be held today. This is not because Campbell so convincingly won, that formal creeds were abolished. It is simply that times have changed. Campbell himself said in his first few sentences that creeds were religious impositions practiced upon the credulity of less favored ages than the present. He began his forth paragraph with the trenchant statement that creeds bear the impress and character of their natal age, as does the human face bear upon its lines and shades the years it has seen and felt.

The world of believers has outgrown its need for special formularies and while these hover as shadows in the traditional history of the religious establishments which created them, or were begotten by them, they no longer form the rigid foundations they once did. They have ceased to be bonds of union or communion. They are no longer employed as criteria by which to judge the opinions and consciences of men. Those who are by nature or training, abjectly pessimistic, regard the present state of fluidity and flexibility, as indicative of a loss of definitive faith. Since I am optimistic, believing in the ultimate triumph of good over evil, I attribute it to the ongoing victory of Jesus as a person over the petty human attempts to define him, and thereby prescribe limitations in thinking about Him.

One of the positive facts of religious history is that it frequently develops paradoxes. In 1843, Mr. Campbell and his associates formed an attack unit against the whole sectarian world with its creeds for union and communion. It must always be remembered that they did not oppose men writing statements of their faith. They repeatedly did that themselves. What they opposed was making such formal statement the basis of union or communion. Belief in Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah was regarded as the ground of reception into and recognition of fellowship.

It has come to pass that, while believers in Christ who formed the sectarian world of Campbell's day are outgrowing and growing out of their creeds as tests of worthiness, the heirs of the movement which he launched are building parties around their creeds. The fact that these are unwritten except in journals they have spawned, devoted to their defense, makes them all the more dangerous and divisive. A creed is what one believes. When it becomes what one must believe to be regarded as a faithful child of God, it is made a test of union or communion. Such "musts" become what Campbell called "the devices of Satan to annoy God's heritage, and to seduce his servants into the paths of schism and alienation, and thus set them at variance with one another."

Regardless of the status of instrumental music, Bible colleges, individual cups, Bible classes, orphan homes, or Herald of Truth, in the mind of God, they should not be made tests of fellowship in the minds of men. Let each congregation make up its own corporate mind, pursue the course it deems scriptural, and be answerable to God for its conduct and actions on these matters. These are not items of a creed to bind upon the consciences of all the saints. Whatever one may think about them let him keep it between himself and God. Let him not try to bind it upon one who does not or cannot see it as he does.

Let congregations be free in Christ to serve Him, but not

free to bind their modes, methods and means upon other congregations. To do the latter will assure the formation of another party and project another sect upon a world which is growing tired of sectarianism. Jesus is more than modes. He is greater than methods. He is superior to means. He in the one foundation which has been laid for unity. Other foundation can no man lay. To attempt it is to divide the family of the Father. This is a horrid evil!

The Good News

Ensign 6 (October 1978): 3

Ensign

One of the basic causes of division among the saints is their inability to “distinguish between things that differ.” Confusion results from confounding of terms. Longevity of an error lends strength to it. The sapling which could easily have been yanked out defies our ability to remove when it has grown into a tree. It is that way with the word gospel. In the new covenant scriptures the term applies to the good news of what God did for us in Jesus. It is historical, consisting of seven facts related to the person of the Son of God in the flesh.

Like all news it was to be preached, proclaimed or announced. It was to be heralded. News is not taught, or exhorted. The gospel happened at a certain time and place. It was the Christ-event. It was the grand good tidings that the Sun of righteousness had risen with healing in His wings. The Way had been revealed. The Truth had broken through. The Life was made manifest. Man could now be justified by faith. The weariness was gone. The uncertainty had departed. Joy had arrived. One could be translated into the kingdom. Old things had passed away. All things had become new. It was a God-happening, a divine deed. And it was unique!

But men forgot that the scriptures were primarily to point men unto Christ. They began to think of Jesus as pointing them to the scriptures. Justification was no longer the gift of God by

the death of Jesus on the cross. It was no longer by grace. It became an attainment by forming proper opinions and judgments of abstract theological concepts. Man would earn eternal life by what he knew, not by whom he knew. The gospel was the entire revelation through the apostles and prophets. Jesus was no longer the chief cornerstone. Regardless of how dearly one loved Him or believed in Him as the Son of God, he had to be right on a multitude of other things or faith in Jesus availed nothing.

“Gospel meetings” were held in which the Christ-event was hardly mentioned. Human dissertations on instrumental music, Sunday schools, individual cups, institutionalism, and a host of other things were passed off by glib partisans as “gospel.” The attacking of sectarian error, challenges to debate on this or that issue, all were regarded as gospel proclamation. Men who believed in Jesus with all of their hearts were regarded as “unbelievers” because they could not deny their convictions as to the non-importance of a lot of secondary and subsidiary issues.

Congregations were formed to rally around one of more than a score of controversial items. The cross was demagnetized. It was no longer the center to attract the lost. One was still “lost” if he came and embraced the cross but did not attend a “faithful church.” In such a divided state as we now have where raucous voices cry, “Lo, here!” or “Lo, there!” it is time for us to recapture the meaning of the gospel. It is time to repair the shattered cross. It is time to reaffirm the difference between the Good news which brings men to Jesus, and the doctrinal implications which men have deduced.

So long as men regard the formation of correct mental concepts about orphan homes, support of Herald of Truth, and cups and classes, as the equivalent to believing the gospel, that long will they be led by blind guides. That long will they continue as victims of schism, division and other works of the

flesh.

The gospel is as old as Pentecost. It was fully announced on that day. Nothing that was not proclaimed on that day can ever become a part of the glorious gospel. Any attempt to add anything to justification by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is a perversion of the only really good news that sinful world has ever heard. It was this which Paul called “the truth of the gospel.” We need communities of believers, open to all who have accepted the good news about Jesus, regardless of their opinions about a thousand other things. The gospel is a person. It is the Lord Jesus Christ!

Swallowing Camels

Ensign 7 (November 1978): 8

Ensign

It is a trait of Pharisees and other legalistic teachers that they develop a warped sense of values. This creates inconsistency in life and teaching. The meticulous observation of minor matters gravitates against a proper relationship to things of greater worth. In a stirring indictment, Jesus said, “You hypocrites! You give to God one tenth even of seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill, and cumin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty. These you should practice, without neglecting the others. Blind guides! You strain a gnat out of your drink, but you swallow a camel!”

Both gnats and camels change with the passing of centuries. The things which men catch in their strainers and carefully toss aside are not the same as those which “bugged” the saints in the days of the apostles. I do not know of a congregation in our day that is in a hassle over circumcision. No one is in a big dither over eating of meats or observation of days. This does not mean there are no longer gnats around. Brethren are swatting and batting at swarms of them all over the landscape.

And they are still gulping down dromedaries, humps and all! This is a built-in reaction to the legalistic stance. It stems from the elemental fact that no one in the flesh can keep law

perfectly. Therefore no flesh can be justified by law. One who thinks we are still under a written code must find something he can do without too much effort, and judge his faithfulness to God by attendance upon that. He is not greatly concerned about concentrating upon justice, mercy and honesty.

I shall never forget that once when I went to a southern state I visited the home of a brother who was an elder in a little congregation back in the piney-woods. I went to invite him to my tent meeting but he could not come because the brethren with whom I was working used individual cups in the Lord's Supper. For two solid hours I listened to him as he argued for "the faithful church" which was "true to the Book" on what he referred to as "the cups question." One year later when I returned to the area he was in prison for moonshining. He was operating a still and "the Feds" had him under observation at the very time he was talking so earnestly to me. Bootlegging was not bad if you had only one cup on Sunday.

I knew another man in the church who would get "liquored up" as the local folk put it, and would start an argument with the Baptist preacher on the street. They would go to it without mercy. He knew Baptist doctrine "top side and bottom" and could give a good account of himself in a verbal tussle, but he had to be "three sheets in the wind" to do it. Not every case of camel-swallowing is as obvious as this. Some brethren have been engaged in the art for so long that they "pop camels" like others do pills. There is a series of questions in Romans 2:17-24 which might prove embarrassing if furnished a modern twist!

New Forms of Service

Ensign 9 (January 1978): 7

Ensign

It is a phenomenon of this age that so many young men and women are seeking for effective ways of ministering to the social outcasts of this ripped-off generation. I meet scores of them. They attend seminaries and schools of preaching. They listen to lectures and wade through classes, some of which seem like a sheer waste of time, wholly unrelated to life in this last quarter of the twentieth century. They are exposed to “successful preachers” imported to tell them how to build a “going church.” But they are turned off by the glaring inconsistency of all of this with what Jesus did and said and what Paul wrote.

In “rap sessions” with me they can let down their hair. And they want to discuss alternate forms of service that touch life where it is raw and bloody. We talk about inner-city work among those who live in flea-bitten, rat-infested garbage-ridden slums. We discuss what can be done to restore the light to eyes that are dull and sodden with hopelessness. We talk about the needs of children exposed from babyhood to filth, brutality and ignorance of an appalling kind.

We discuss campus ministry with students who are brilliant and perceptive in science and engineering, but who have been maneuvered into skepticism by clever humanists who mould plastic minds like a sculptor. How can we score a

breakthrough with young moderns who have grown up in a world where the power of agape has never been experienced and where love is all too often equated with sexual gratification?

We kick around the idea of whether we might be used as instruments of a “Third Great Awakening” if we submitted wholly to God in unreserved surrender. And we recall that when Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards, who is credited with launching the “First Great Awakening” became president of Yale in 1795, he found but one young man who admitted to faith in Jesus. All of the rest were infidels. But the prayers of Dwight and that young man launched a movement which again swept the country. Out of the climate of the “Second Great Awakening” the restoration movement was born.

We discuss getting out of religious structures with rigid rituals decreed by tradition, and going into coffee-houses and store-fronts, where Jesus is truly Lord and the Man of the hour. It is obvious that the image we have created for the church in another day is no longer effective. It is a lifeguard station without lifeboats. It is sheltered above the waves. It moves away from the drowning and despairing. It does not offer help to the shipwrecked, the flotsam and jetsam of humanity— the youthful prostitute, the drug addict, the alcoholic. It has been made into an upper middle class retreat. It is no longer an oasis for the poverty-stricken, the desperately poor.

The younger men of our generation want to move into the world with its hurt and its agonies. They want to bring the balm of love to the loveless. They receive little comfort from their parents. These think they are wasting their lives. The schools they attend have little sympathy with their goals. They discourage them from their desire to “Let go, and let God!” The local congregations do not put them on their list of “Timothys.”

But it just could be that God, who never attaches the same glory to our building programs as we do, and who may never

become as high on our sectarian signboards as we appear to be, may be working out His will in strange ways. He may still be using off-beat characters as He used Samson to tear down the temple of Dagon. We may have prophets among us and know it not! The one body is so much alive and filled with such vitality that it may follow its Head into the world which He loved and penetrated. God grant that we do not merely sit and watch it happen from the grandstands we have erected in the “green-belt” around our cities.

The Clergy System

Ensign 10 (February 1979): 5

Ensign

Perhaps one of the most subtle works of the flesh is the party spirit. It creeps into the heart under the guise of the purest motives. It is defended by its possessors with the highest idealism. But its attitude is always the same. Times change and as they do the methods employed must be adapted to the culture. Heretics are no longer burned at the stake. Dissenters are no longer tortured on the rack.

But sectarianism has not lost the spirit of persecution. It is the climate which has changed, not the hearts. There are certain characteristics which still obtain. They will always be present. One is the arrogance of the clergy. By the term “clergy” I refer to trained professionals who sell their skills and are hired by congregations to become their front men. The prerogatives granted to all by the grace of God are surrendered to such men who contract to edify, guard and protect those whose rights are abdicated in their behalf.

Their presumption is that the masses are ignorant and should be kept so, except for the things which they deign to deliver to them. The docile group is reduced to a speechless glob, who are doomed to unreplying silence. Their ears must be forever open and their mouths forever shut except in the brief expression of appreciation for and acquiescence in what is said from the sacred desk.

The clergy is always jealous of its power and position. It pays lipservice to humility, but gives its heart to pride. It feels a sense of superiority. It must dictate where the saints can go. It must regulate their lives. It must decide to whom they may listen. If one who has not been given the “Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval” by the sect is in the area, his appearance must not be mentioned. His brochures must be thrown into the office wastebasket. The problem in the Roman Catholic party has been to get past the hierarchy. The problem in the Methodist party has been to get past the diocesan bishop. The problem in the Church of Christ party is to get past the local preacher. All of these constitute walls between those who support them and the truth to which they have never been exposed.

The clergy system always begets a double standard. The clergy can do things for which the flock is censured. I am a controversial figure because I am not sectarian. I represent no party on earth today. Any man who belongs only to Jesus and refuses to allow his life to be dictated by any man on earth will be a problem to those who belong to a party. He is a threat. But I simply refuse to be manipulated by papers or partisans. I am free to go anywhere God opens up a door and share what I think. I do not bind it upon anyone. I just share it and go on my way rejoicing. I allow each person to stand or fall to his own master. But it is amusing to note the many places I go where the preachers publicly warn the saints not to go and hear me. Yet those same preachers are present in my meetings.

However, there is real hope for the future. The whole clergy system, which grew up as a parasite on the body, is fast falling into decay. Preachers are sick and tired of being bought and sold. They want to become “free agents.” And congregations are tired of what they are being fed. They feel they ought to be served better fare for what they are forced to pay. The truth is that we are entering a new age. We are emerging from the “Dark Ages” of creedalism and sectarianism. We are once more savoring the grace of God, We are experiencing seasons of

refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

Congregations of saints are looking for liberty to be themselves, moulded by the Spirit rather than by the opinions of men. This has produced free men in the pulpits in some places. Wherever they are the people with whom they share their lives will be free. They will be sought out. The congregations will grow where freedom abounds. Those still in bondage will denounce them but this will serve only to announce them. Once again the “blood” of the martyrs will become the seed of the kingdom. We were purchased by Jesus to become sons and daughters of God, not slaves to a system. Many are now discovering this and are being blessed.

The Tide of History

Ensign 5 (September 1979): 10/90

Ensign

Sometimes I get to wondering how it was in the beginning. I am not talking about the creation, but the inception of the restoration movement. In fantasy I go back and wonder if the gentle Thomas Campbell ever talked things over with his wife, Jane, a descendant of the French Huguenots, who had known persecution. Did she sense the frustration and hurt which came to him through the action of the Charters Presbytery, which unfrocked him as a result of his gracious attempt to make the table of the Lord available to all of the scattered Presbyterians throughout the new world wilderness, whether they were Burgher or Anti-Burgher?

Did she know about his dreams for the unity of the Christians in all of the sects? Was the “Declaration and Address” the subject of conversation around the breakfast table in the morning? Did they talk about it after the tea and scones in the evening when they assembled at the early candlelighting for deep devotions, accompanied by hymns set to tunes in long or short meter? What questions did the eager Alexander ask, and what thoughts raced through his active mind as he contemplated and studied the answers?

The reason I ponder about such matters is because I have come to realize that the movement was a historical event. It originated in the minds of men and was carried out in the course

of time. They discussed it, reasoned about it, and frequently disagreed about portions of it. Certainly, the Holy Spirit must have had something to do with it, as He does with everything which magnifies the name of Jesus. There is probably nothing which happens to us which does not reflect his involvement in us and through us. But the suffering and anguish were human, and not divine, endured in the flesh and not in the spirit. The tears that were shed were human tears.

It was a subject discussed wherever men gathered, at a lograising or husking-bee, or on the porch of the store of a frontier merchant with his rude lot of supplies. It was the subject on stagecoaches and riverboats, during slow and tedious journeys. Was it also a topic of conversation at a quilting, or apple butter stirrings, where women came together for a little respite from their loneliness? I dare say that it was, and what a joy it would be if by some reverse-time machine we could be transported back to 1825 and sit on a split log bench in a rude meetinghouse or in the forest, and listen in.

We are also a part of history which is simply a record of the footprints of God in human affairs. He has always been a historymaking God as the apostle pointed out to the Athenian philosophers on Mar's Hill. He has not closed up shop or bankrupted His power in our day. He is still making history, still in the remnant business and still working toward that grand climax of the ages which will answer the prayer of His dear Son. Only now we are His agents, and soon we will have moved through the wings and off the stage of action, and into the dreamless dust. We are either working with Him or against Him. We are either contributing to the unity or to the disunity of all believers. We are either gathering, or scattering abroad, as Jesus so well put it.

It is one of the great tragedies of the human predicament that we can dream so high and fall so low. In our aspiration to be part of the Lord's church we deny the very principle on

which it was founded. We end up like the unfaithful servant entrusted with His master's affairs, smiting our fellows and beating them because of the delayed return of our Lord. We speak evil of and entreat our brethren worse than those who are aliens to the cause we claim to love.

It is a built-in feature of history that one day it will end. It had a beginning and it will have an ending. Only He who knows the end from the beginning, and who can call the things that be not as though they were, knows when that time will come, but come it will, as certainly as it exists now. This should drive us with real determination. It should cause us to work without cessation. "Blessed is the servant who, when his lord comes, he shall find so doing." Whether young or old we should determine the will of God and press forward in its accomplishment. The young should thank God they have so long to serve, the aged that it is almost finished!

We are a part of the flowing tide of ongoing history but in a certain sense history began when we were born. And our history will end when we die. We cannot expect to make a great impact, but we can do what we can. And in the final day of gathering into the granary, the angel reapers will know that we were here, and that we contributed what we could to the betterment of humanity and the cause we loved more than life itself.

Fellowship in Corinth

Ensign 6 (October 1979): 8/108

Ensign

It seems quite clear from a reading of the apostolic letters that fellowship is not based upon an unqualified obedience or untarnished conformity to everything that was taught. This seems somewhat incredible to us, having been reared to believe that the slightest deviation makes it impossible. It is only when one realizes that fellowship is that glorious relationship into which one has been called by announcement of the facts about Jesus, and his faith in them, that he can get a clear picture of God's plan and purpose for those whom the taint of carnality still clings after having been rescued from the garbage-strewn waters of the sinful nature in which we formerly floundered and choked.

Those who have postulated conformity as essential to fellowship have always had to reckon with Corinth. Paul did not write to them to straighten them out on the fellowship issue, for it was something they did not have screwed up in their minds. Their problem was putting it into practice. But if they could be in the fellowship with all of the things that were wrong with them, it comes as a sad rebuke to those who today would break the ties over such trivia as is credited with having created our seamy divisions.

One who trusts in his own righteousness and refuses to have anything to do with "brethren in error" would have had

difficult choices in Corinth. He might have been tempted to go “back down home” or to join with a few others in a small remnant of the same ilk to start a “faithful church” in the Odd Fellows Hall on the corner of Tenth and Main Streets. He finds it hard to believe that Paul called all of them his brethren and beloved children. He finds it still harder to understand why he told them that “you are God’s temple and that God dwells in you.” This is doubly difficult to believe if one holds that the Spirit dwells in us only through the Word, which was the very thing they were disobeying.

It bothers them that Paul wanted to visit such a congregation after passing through Macedonia and even stay with them and spend the winter, and be helped on his journey by them afterwards. Most of them would not have been caught dead in such a place. And as for sending a young preacher like Timothy to see them and to “be put at ease among them” they could not conceive how anyone could have rested easy while there. Corinth poses a real problem and proves a real trial to those who seriously think about fellowship, but that is the very thing a lot of folks will not do.

The Corinthians were glaringly wrong about matters of behavior, and even farther off on matters of doctrine. Yet Paul conveyed the greetings of all the churches in Asia, as well as those of all the brethren, including those who met in the home of Aquila and Priscilla. He even wrote his personal tribute in his own hand, and ended by saying, “My love be with you all.” In doing so, he probably furnished us with one of the finest examples of how to regard a community of saints which is all mixed up and full of problems.

The real secret is found in chapter eleven where he begins by saying, “I commend you,” and goes on in verse 17 to add, “But in the following instructions I do not commend you.” This is the secret of working any with congregation. I do not ever remember being with one where I agreed with everything that

was said and done. All of them pursue certain policies which I would change if I had my way. But I simply commend what I can, and refrain from commending what I cannot, and love all who are there, and count them all as my brothers. I realize that God had to be ever so gracious to receive me into his fellowship with all my wrong ideas, so I am charitable with others.

Knowledge Puffs Up

Ensign 7 (November 1979): 3/143

Ensign

It is very difficult for us to imagine the plight of those who were reared in ancient idolatry. From early childhood they were cradled in the fear and superstition accompanying the worship of these imaginary beings who were credited with all sorts of malign influence. Every stream, every tree, every flower, was the haunt of some deity, and one had to be careful not to offend them. The mystery religions of the Greeks postulated as many gods and lords as there were objects in nature. All of these had to be pampered and placated with meticulous care lest they become offended and drastic results ensue. One could not engage in marriage, go on a journey, or erect a house without making a sacrifice to the special god who presided over such an event.

It was difficult indeed to accept one God, and one Lord, as at Corinth. And there was ever the danger that the one who had come to this knowledge would look down upon and despise his more ignorant brother, who wanted to believe it and was yet motivated by a weak conscience. Paul wrote, half in derision and irony that concerning food offered to idols “we all have knowledge.” But he points out that such “knowledge” puffs up, while love builds up. And “if any one imagines that he knows something,” he is not half as smart as he thinks he is. “But if one loves God, one is known by Him.”

This might make it appear that God has not interested

himself in our knowing things, and that error is as good as truth. Not so! It is always better to be right than to be wrong. That which is right can never be wrong, and that which is wrong can never be right. But knowledge must be attained. It is a process of development and growth. And there is no stopping place. No one can ever retire from learning. There are no graduations and commencements. We are disciples until we die, and probably we will learn more after that event than before.

Thus all knowledge is relative. Truth is absolute, but our appreciation of it at any given time is not. God does not know us because we are so brilliant, but because we have grasped the secret of love, without which, knowledge makes us pompous windbags. We know an idol has no existence. We know there is no God but one. Although there were “many gods” on Olympus, and many lords in the skies, as the pagans looked at it, yet to us there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ.

“However not all possess this knowledge.” And that’s where the rub comes in! A congregation may possess at the same time philosophers and peasants, rhetoricians and rustics. And it is the one with knowledge who must be careful. He can eat food offered to idols with no qualm. He knows that the idol is a figment of the imagination and has no real existence. But his brother, “through being hitherto accustomed to idols, may eat food as really offered to an idol.” So the liberty of one becomes a snare for the other. It is true that food will not commend us to God. “We are no better off if we eat, and no worse off if we do not.” We cannot excuse our action on the basis of necessity.

If any one sees you, eating in an idol’s temple, while you may know at the time that you are merely there for the food without thought of its being offered to a false or mythological being, he might be encouraged to eat meat because it was offered to an idol and not in spite of the fact. By doing so he would be defiled and ultimately destroyed. It is here that love for others takes precedence. Knowledge would allow you to do with a clear

conscience that which would cause another to stumble. It is cold, brittle and scintillating. But love is warm, tender and self-effacing. It thinks of the effect while knowledge is concerned with what affects you.

God is not interested in food, but in persons. When one deliberately does that which makes him neither better nor worse, in order to demonstrate his broad, liberal spirit, and regardless of his brother's feelings, he may destroy one for whom Christ died. What a price to pay for having one's own way. "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." My liberty is circumscribed, not by my conscience, but by my brother's. Its bounds are drawn by his thinking and not mine.

Sinning against your brethren is sinning against Christ. Wounding the conscience of one who is weak is like driving another spear into the body of Jesus. Perhaps no other subject is more important in our day than how we regard the brethren-all of them. There is no problem so great, no ideal harder of attainment. If we are to exalt knowledge let it be the knowledge of how to love. Let our knowledge be that we have crossed the frontier from death unto life because we love the brethren.

Tyranny Gone to Seed

Ensign 4 (August 1980): 2/62

Ensign

A few days ago I received a letter from an agonized brother. He and his wife and oldest son were members of a local congregation under the supervision of three elders. Two of them were but “yes men” for the third, who was the wealthiest man in the congregation and who liked to throw his weight around. I had never met the brother who wrote, but he had exercised his right to take his family to the local Baptist Church one night at the invitation of the man with whom he worked. Three days later he was visited by the elders who told him he had sinned and would have to “make it right” with the congregation by publicly confessing it and asking forgiveness.

He asked for the scriptural grounds for their accusation and the one elder who did the talking, while the other two merely nodded assent, quoted, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” The brother protested that they were not unbelievers, and that he had heard more to create faith in Jesus that one night than he had heard in the local congregation of which they were the elders, in a whole month. He also pointed out to them that during their recent meeting with an imported evangelist they had invited all of the Baptists and everyone else in the area to come.

The elder said that was different. It was right to ask people to come and hear the truth, but it was not right to go and listen

to error. There was nothing the brother could say to persuade them and they left after issuing an ultimatum, giving him a month in which to come through and meet their terms, or he and his family would be excluded. He was writing to me asking for advice.

It took me a little by surprise. I guess I did not realize that such places still existed in this latter part of the twentieth century. I have been out of the narrow sectarian rat-race for so long, that I just supposed that grown men, old enough to be married and have children, and possessed of rational faculties could go and listen to anyone without fear of reprisal. The letter jerked me out of my fantasy and brought me rudely back into the world of reality. Of course, I could not make specific recommendations for the brother. I pointed out to him that he was being held hostage to a system unknown in the revelation of God. To become free from it would be like having the prison door opened and being thrown from darkness into a world of light. What he did, must be up to his own heart. I offered to pray for him as I regularly do for all who are in bondage either to sin, or to sinners.

It appears incredible to me that three men so filled with pomposity could impose their will upon that of a congregation, so that they would supinely consent to such an arbitrary act as they were preparing to wreak upon this brother. It is the sprit of the guillotine, the rack, and the stake. Not even in civil law does such coercion work, much less in that realm which teaches the deepest and tenderest emotions of the human heart. It is unwise, injudicious and ineffective. If anything is inclined to make one think favorably of the Baptist communion it is such action as this upon the part of those who claim to be the one holy, apostolic and catholic church of God upon earth.

Sir William Blackstone wrote in his ‘Commentaries on the Laws of England,’ “Every wanton and causeless restraint of the will of the subject, whether practiced by a monarch, or nobility,

or a popular assembly, is a degree of tyranny.” Blackstone might have included some elderships under his list of those qualifying to be tyrants. It is a sad thing indeed when men start to think for others, but it is a sadder thing when they begin to impose their thinking upon those who cannot conscientiously concede to it. Lord deliver us from such tyranny!

The Death of the Ideal

Ensign 6 (October 1980): 9/109

Ensign

Herbert Hoover said once in *Forbes Magazine*, “Words without action are the assassins of idealism.” All of us have known individuals who talked a great life, but who never rose above mediocrity. I personally knew a man who was always going to make an investment which someday would make him rich. He recently died, almost a pauper, Three days before his decease from a heart attack he told me what he planned to do when his ship came in. Poor fellow, he forgot that he had not sent it out yet.

Congregations are like those who compose them. Many of them are made up of those who get together and talk about evangelism and reaching the whole world with the gospel. Most of them have not even talked to those in the same block about the good news of Jesus. There are places which worry incessantly about what will happen to the blacks of Africa, but who have never spent a minute worrying about those who live on the other side of the city. The church is generally the last place in the community where people can meet as equals in their sinful lives and in their need of the grace of God.

The fact is that most sermons, regardless of how good, or how well-prepared, are only partially heard. And the part that is heard makes no difference. No one is aroused. No one gets up to start marching. It is like a speechless person trying to

communicate with one who is deaf. In 1740, George Whitefield visited Jonathan Edwards in New England. The two men together preached a series of sermons which started a revival movement that became known as "The Great Awakening." The sermon by Edwards which he titled "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God," caused his entire congregation to rise from their seats weeping and moaning.

To murder idealism is a frightful thing indeed. It makes our aims appear worthless and our goals fruitless. It is like the fig tree upon which Jesus found "nothing but leaves." It is like the son in the parable who declared he would go work in the vineyard, but afterwards went not. We have heard enough discourses to save the whole world. We have been exhorted, encouraged, and urged to go forth. We have made scores of resolutions but have not carried them out.

What is needed is someone who will do what God wants done if he has to do it alone. It is not essential to get everyone doing his duty before anyone starts doing it. I am thinking of a man who started by himself to visit homes in the vicinity of the congregation. Soon he had been to a hundred. Then he started in on the second hundred. It was not long until he was recognized by people in the community. Without any fanfare, without seeking recognition, he simply went from door to door, talking to people and sharing with them. He coupled his actions with his words and watered idealism with his performance. It can be done!

The Pattern (1)

Ensign 12 (April 1982): 5/231

Ensign

John Laurence Mosheim was born in 1695. He became a German theologian and historian of note, as well as chancellor of the university of Gottingen. In the second volume of his *Ecclesiastical History*, as translated by Archibald Maclaine, he writes about a restoration movement undertaken about the year 1030 A.D. by some zealous individuals. As nearly as I can determine it was one of a number of such endeavors which had graced the saints to that time.

Mosheim writes: “They had also formed to themselves a notion, that the primitive church was to be the standing and perpetual model, according to which the rites, government, and worship of all Christian churches were to be regulated in all the ages of the world; and that the lives and manners of the holy apostles were to be rigorously followed in every respect by all the ministers of Christ.”

Unfortunately, almost as soon as the movement began, it became a victim of the rash and impetuous judgment of all who allegedly were its friends. Disagreeing about the particulars of the early disciples, they fell to branding as heretics those who disagreed with them and fragmented as had every previous

attempt to recapture the divine model. They literally came unglued. Mosheim says: "These notions, which were injudiciously taken up and blindly entertained, without any regard to the differences of times, places, circumstances, and characters; without considering that the precedence and piety of the governors of the church, were productive of many pernicious effects, and threw those good reformers, whose zeal was not always according to knowledge, from the extreme of superstition into the extreme of enthusiasm."

I know the problem. I can relate to it. I was nurtured from the beginning of my Christian career on the idea that the primitive church was an exact and meticulous pattern for all subsequent congregations to imitate. I was hooked on "pattern theology" as Reuel Lemmons so affectionately and approvingly calls it. I proclaimed it instead of the gospel because at the time I thought it was the gospel. I regarded the new covenant scriptures as a written code of laws functioning in the same capacity as the law of Moses. It had not yet dawned upon me what John meant when he said, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." I thought Jesus had nailed one law to the cross and handed another one down. So I majored in the law but I minored in grace and truth.

I was divisive. I was also honest. I thought the faction which I championed was the church for which Jesus died. I now believe that none of our factions were that church. Not all of them put together is the one body. Anyone who preaches "pattern theology" will be divisive rather than unitive. The seed of division is sown in the very concept. The germ which has produced the universal malady of fragmentation which has perplexed and troubled the disciples in every generation lies latent in the philosophy. Sooner or later, regardless of the goodness or earnestness of the man who accepts it, it will erupt on one side or the other.

The early congregations were not all alike in every particular. There was a wide difference in those of Jewish and Greek constituency. No doubt the disciples at Rome were divergent from both. The faith creates a relationship with a person. Because he was at the right hand of God it was a vertical relationship. The vertical relationship brought together in one body all who sustained it. It is that relationship we should seek to restore and not a code of jurisprudence which requires a judiciary to interpret. We are one in Christ. He is our pattern and reflects himself in the many facets of each life.

The Pattern (2)

Ensign 1 (May 1982): 8/8

Ensign

Last month I affirmed that the very idea of going back to find a specific pattern for the “called out ones” of our day is delusive and divisive. It is a dream which has been harbored and pursued by earnest people in every generation, always with the same result. Our own “restoration” attempt was one which could have been attended with profound success, if it had been at all possible. But it was not and we ended up with two dozen rival sects each claiming it alone was the family of God. What a waste of the prophets and apostles, many of whom suffered brutal and violent deaths, if all God derived from it was one small arrogant party. How the plan of heaven was thwarted by that arch-enemy of souls if the last best hope of the kingdom of heaven on earth is dependent upon one of our debating, fighting and strife-torn splinters.

What happened, of course, was that when we could not find a pattern we devised one and read it back into the revealed word. We spoke where the Bible spoke, and substituted our own thinking where it was silent. I can see it now in my own thinking. I was convinced that the ambassadors of Jesus were dead set against instrumental music, colleges and pacifism, although they said nothing at all about two of them, and the third had to be distilled through our own strainer. I was just as certain, however, that they were in favor of Bible classes, individual cups and other things, as we saw them and practiced them, although

again I had to trust in our deductions from passages which did not touch hide, hair, or horns of what we strove to find in them. It was just that Jesus was for what we were for and He was against what we were against.

Of course, with our deep-seated traditional feeling for following Christ to “the letter” as we called it, the only thing we could do was to separate ourselves from the apostates who used instrumental music, or from the hobbyists who believed in only one cup. We could not worship with the first and would not with the last. So we found the scripture, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” Little did it matter to us that the writer was speaking there of the pagan world, or that the question was the agreement of the temple of God with idols. Nor did it matter that the very next verse spoke of the fatherhood of God for his family of sons and daughters.

We were separatists parading under the banner of a false sense of unity. We therefore looked at every disciple outside our ranks as either a sectarian or an extremist. A sectarian was one who had something we opposed; an extremist was one who opposed something we had. One who advocated instrumental music was a sectarian, one who opposed the Sunday School was an extremist. There was no hope for the first. He had transgressed. He had gone beyond what was written. The second might be saved on the basis of his ignorance, although we could not guarantee it. Anyone who did not have what we did was ignorant. Every person who disagreed with us was a threat, every dissident was a traitor.

So we ended up where all the other “restorationists” before us had. Finding no divine pattern we invented our human pattern and passed it off as the one which the primitive ekklesia had followed. We fragmented into hostile clans and tribes, and declared war on each other. We swung our tomahawks and threw our spears and rejoiced when we drew blood. Converts

were not so much saved for Christ as they were scalps on the totem poles in front of our teepees. We were caught up in a vortex of justification for what we had extracted from our own thought processes.

And we were sadly devoid of those great realms of the Holy Spirit— justice, mercy and peace. We were like children fighting over toys. We were carnal and walked as men. We were selfish in wanting our own way and resenting those who were wont to question it. That is the way of the party, the way of the flesh.

The Pattern (3)

Ensign 2 (June 1982): 5/25

Ensign

One of the grave problems concerning those who look for a pattern for the assembly of the new covenant in the scriptures is that the scriptures were written after the body had been planted and in existence for some time. A good part of the letters are devoted to correcting systems of error which had sprung up—Judiasm, Gnosticism, philosophy, and empty deceit, which were making a prey of the disciples. If the scriptures were a blueprint for erecting the true tabernacle they were given to the wrong persons at the wrong time.

We are distinctly informed that the true tabernacle was set up “not by man but by the Lord.” Obviously he did not have to read what was written by Paul, Peter, James and Jude, to know what He was doing. Moses had to see a pattern for the early tabernacle he constructed and was told to “Make everything according to the pattern shown you in the mountain. But the ministry of Jesus is far more excellent and he is the mediator of a better covenant enacted upon better promises.”

It will do us good to recall that Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses because the builder of a house has more glory than the house. Every house has been built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. We did not need a blueprint because we were not building the house. We are the house. We are living stones built into a holy temple in the Lord,

built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. The fact is that we cannot build, erect or establish a church of the living God. We can only become a part of it. It is a sin of arrogance and ignorance for one to announce that he is going somewhere to construct a “faithful church.”

We do no ill to either the community of the faithful, or to the faithful in the community, when we recognize that the true tabernacle did not proceed from the new covenant scriptures but preceded them. They did not constitute a written code for the people either individually or collectively. They were not written as laws to be bound but as letters to be shared. There were long lists of personal requests to bring books and unwritten parchments, and to drop by and pick up a cloak where it had been left. There were letters of thanks and some of censure. We miss so much of their intent and content when we read them as a code of laws. We gain so much insight when we read them for what they were— letters written from hearts of appreciation and love.

A misunderstanding of this has resulted in our becoming worshipers of the Book rather than of the Lord of the Book. We have lost Jesus in the church of today, and the church herself has been lost in the Bible. Instead of being allowed to be the head of the body, Jesus has been relegated to becoming the managerial genius for groups of dissident members, everyone of which snatches at him and seeks to have him to give prestige to their various projects. One of our greatest tasks is to rescue Jesus from the church, but in order to do that we must first extricate the church from the Bible where it has become lost through nineteen hundred years of bickering and backbiting, of strife and debating. Each of these must be freed to be what it was intended to be— the head, the body, and the gentle guide.

For years I rather blindly followed what I mistakenly concluded was the blueprint for the community which Jesus built upon the rock. I considered that all others had deserted.

They had gone over the hill. As the young people put it they had “flaked off” or “flacked out.” They had abandoned ship. We had arrived, everyone else had departed. Finally, God was gracious enough to allow me to realize what I was doing. The scales fell from my eyes. I met my Waterloo. Better yet I came face to face with Jesus on my Damascus Road. I came to realize that what I thought was the pattern was only the conception and contrivance of my feverish partisan brain. There was no pattern but Jesus. He was the center and circumference of the faith. That which did not proceed from him had no authority, that which did not lead to him had no relevance.

We can never be united on a partisan pattern concept. We can be one in Christ and on Christ. Other foundation can no man lay than the one God has laid, Jesus Christ. It is on him we must build if our faith brings us together. He is our peace. He has broken down the middle wall of partition and by doing so has made both one. We must recognize the givenness of that unity.

Strategy for Unity

Ensign 7 (November 1982): 6/126

Ensign

I have become, rightly or wrongly for me, deeply concerned about the prayer of Jesus for the oneness of all who believe in Him through the testimony of the apostles. I confess freely that it has become “a magnificent obsession.” It was uppermost in the mind of God’s Son as He faced the cross with all of its horror, brutality and degradation. To read carefully, meaningfully, and analytically, the intercession found in John 17 will have a profound effect upon the mind and heart. To be aware of the circumstances surrounding it will deepen its profundity. It will also drive one to the place where he must develop a personal strategy for waging peace even as others wage war.

I use the term “personal strategy” for I am not so vain as to think that in my remaining years I can enlist everyone to storm the same forts as I do, or to lob shells into the same enemy encampments. One who feels as deeply as I do is occasionally called upon to go it alone. He must look to heaven for understanding of his motives, methods and objectives. If he dies upon some isolated battlefield, forsaken and alone, it is because that is where he chose to fight.

The saints of God seldom realize it but they are surrounded today by “a vast and howling wilderness.” It is fairly easy, and distinctly more comfortable, to fantasize that we have

reached the promised land and that God is driving out the heathen before us. But we are still in the wilderness. And we are not traveling in unison. We are marching forward in parties. All of us look toward the same pillar of cloud by day and the same pillar of fire by night. We sing the same marching songs. But our tribal loyalties take priority over our devotion to one God and one Lord. The very designations we use demonstrate this. We call ourselves Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Churches of God, Churches of Christ, Pentecostals, and several hundred other exclusive designations which forbid access to any who do not bow to our traditions, subscribe to our opinions, or pronounce our shibboleths. We cannot become disciples of Jesus without first becoming something else.

The problem of the late twentieth century is that the wilderness is increasing proportionately with each passing day. The birth-rate of humanity throughout the world shows that we are losing the battle. Add to this the violence and disregard for the sanctity of human life which encompasses the whole earth and one can see that we are in grave danger of becoming overwhelmed. The one thing that augurs well for us is not that we are right about everything but that we place our trust in the right person. It is faith in Him, not faith in ourselves which keeps us from going under for the third time.

I have not reached my present convictions by an easy route. There have been misunderstandings, false judgments and accusations in print and in pulpit. But through His grace, I have survived them all. I have never lost sight of the goal, and although it seems as far away as when I began. I realize that it may be the mist which clouds my eyes. I know that I have moved into the third phase of my personal strategy. It is two-pronged. It is a source of tremendous satisfaction as I watch the hand of God cleave the way before me. I find that I am especially thankful that I resisted being impaled upon the two sharp bayonets which thrust through others who caught the vision.

Almost everyone of them left the people with whom he had been associated and transferred allegiance to another party. The book "Voices of Concern" details a number of those who did that. I do not criticize them for it. In the "institutional framework" in which they were reared it might have seemed the thing to do. But it was not for me. I could not defend the foibles of a new party any more than I could the fables of the old one. I made up my mind that I would not flake out, fake out or be run out. I loved all of the brethren and resolved to remain with them. I am still meeting with the same brethren I have always been with. They are tolerant and understanding.

"The reproaches of them which reproached me have fallen upon them," but they shrug them off. Most of them are too busy to care. They have been tremendous in assisting me and we have grown together spiritually. When someone inadvertently drops in who thinks we are "too liberal," he soon departs, going forth in the same love in which he came in. We are too preoccupied with Jesus to engage in distrust or hatred for one of His other children.

Second, we were not led into the quicksand which embroiled other reformers. I think of that noble soul, Ernest Beam. We grew up in the same party. He was in our home when I was a mere schoolboy. He was gentle, kind and courteous. Later on, when in his mature years, he became enamored with the idea of bringing together the warring forces of the restoration movement, he united with another great saint, William Jessup, then president of San Jose Bible College, in making a thrust toward unity. He was viciously opposed by the Mafia in the "Church of Christ." They resolved to "shoot him down." I was one of them. We regarded Brother Beam as a composite of Benedict Arnold, Major Andre and Aaron Burr, all rolled into one. When I was in California he called me up to ask if I would arrange to have luncheon with him. I refused. That decision has left me to mourn with bitter tears. I never saw him again.

His mistake was that he became embroiled in things as well as with Jesus. He wrote several hundred Church of Christ preachers and asked them to distinguish between about fifty things they were doing and instrumental music. It was like throwing a sack of garbage into an electric fan. The arguments were interminable. The name-calling was despicable. Right from the start I resolved not to become guilty of measuring our selves by ourselves, or of comparing ourselves by ourselves. It is not wise. So, by avoiding Scylla upon one hand, and Charybdis upon the other, I have survived until this day, bloody but unbowed.

James Deforest Murch and I became close personal friends. He was often in our home in his latter days. Although a relatively dry public communicator he was a skilful writer, an appreciative friend and an excellent conversationalist. His head was stored with historical facts about the restoration movement. He teamed with Claude Witty, of Detroit, in a unity movement. Bro. Witty started out in the same sect as I did, but like everyone else who learned very much, he soon became too “liberal” for us. Murch and Witty began a series of National Unity Meetings, on May 3, 4, 1938, which continued for ten years.

Brother Murch told me the greatest error in these gatherings was that they became a sounding-board for emphasizing differences of opinion before the men hardly knew each other. He regretted that more time had not been given to prayer and points of agreement as a prelude for the discussions. The Gospel Advocate began blasting away at the meetings from the start. Later, it and the Firm Foundation studiously avoided mention of them. Men like H. Leo Boles, editor of the Gospel Advocate, shot them down almost before they had tested their wings. There was none of the spirit of the unity meeting at Lexington in which Barton W. Stone and Raccoon John Smith received each other publicly.

I have sought to go at the matter from the opposite viewpoint. By emphasizing faith in Jesus as the sine qua non of

our relationship to God, I have considered other matters as auxiliary or subsidiary truths. All truths are equally true but not all are equally important. There is no use of denying relationship over things which are not essential to it. We need to learn the fine art of putting things in their respective classes so that we will not come unglued every time someone discovers something which appears as a new truth to us. After all there is no new truth to God.

On Being One

Ensign 8 (December 1982): 7/147

Ensign

Division among children of God is seldom defended, and then only by those who are fearful and insecure. But while it is not condoned, neither is it dealt with effectively. It is regarded as a necessary evil which we can hardly help but perpetuate. We cannot divest ourselves of it, and so we must live with it, as we would with some physical disfigurement or deformity. It is an “old man of the sea” which has fastened itself upon us and has to be borne as was the original by Sinbad the sailor.

I deny this fantasy and reject it conclusively and completely. It is a rejection of the word of God and a repudiation of the divine design. In Ephesians 1:9, 10 we are informed that “the plan of God for the fulness of time” was “to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.” The word plan is from *oikonomia*. It is the original from which we get economy. It referred properly to the management of household affairs. It was probably “the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.” It came to mean orderly arrangement of things, which is the secret of good housekeeping, then a scheme or plan to promote such order.

It was God’s aim from the beginning to bring everything into an orderly array. He is a God of order, harmony and precision. He cannot tolerate insubordination or disarray. So His far-reaching plan was to unite all things, and to do it in His

Son. The prior verse declares that “He has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of His will, according to His purpose set forth in Christ.” We are not ignorant of His will and purpose. He has made it known, and with all wisdom and insight. The problem is that we have not exercised the wisdom and insight, so the will and purpose are still a mystery unto us.

I think we will realize that a mystery cannot be grasped until it is declared. One cannot be responsible for misunderstanding it. But once revealed we become accountable for how we treat it. The disregard for the revelation of God will damn the people of this generation. Their cool, and often calculated, spurning of truth will judge them in the final day of accounts. But we will not go unscathed for our casual treatment of His will, purpose and plan, which is to unite all things. The declaration of the mystery leads us to see that “there is one body.” When that body is segmented, fragmented, parceled out, and splintered, someone will be held accountable.

It is just as evil to perpetuate evil as to cause it. We cannot deny that we exist in a divided state. And we will continue to do so until someone is bold enough to do something to correct the situation. The mere fact that we have lived in such a state long enough that it has become a way of life is no excuse. God has not accepted it. It is not His way of life. It is contrary to His will. It is opposed to His purpose. It is hostile to His plan. Someone must devise a strategy to wage peace as others wage war.

Sometimes we do not fully comprehend what we are saying. We limit the effect of our remarks. Caiaphas was like that. He said to those who were afraid that if they let Christ go, the Romans would come and destroy the holy place and their nation, “You know nothing at all; you do not understand that it is expedient that one man should die for this people, and that the whole nation should not perish.” Caiaphas arrogantly accused the populace of knowing nothing at all, but he did not know it all either. He said they did not understand but he proved to be

devoid of understanding also.

John comments, “He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.” This indicates that God is not interested in one nation only. He has children in all nations. They were scattered abroad, but the death of Jesus was to act as a magnet. It was to be a catalyst. Those who were scattered were to be gathered into one. What do you think God will do with those who would scatter abroad those who had been gathered into one?

In the previous chapter Jesus taught about his people from the standpoint of sheep. The enemies were three. They were the hireling, the thief and the wolf. The first deserts the sheep, the second steals them, and the third catches and scatters them. Jesus, as the good shepherd, knows his sheep. He knows them as certainly as the Father knows him. But He declares, “I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock and one shepherd.” But the enemies remain. There are still hirelings. There are still thieves. There are still wolves. Instead of allowing the sheep to rest safely in the one fold, they catch and scatter them.

God’s people are divided. Those who deny this are only fooling themselves. They are whistling in the dark, ignoring reality and enthroning phantasy. The idea that any sect now existing contains all whom God recognizes is a tragic error. It is a will-o-the wisp. The idea that any such sect is “the faithful church” is an egregious error. So long as we are divided there is no “faithful church.” No part is equal to the whole, and the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts, not just a few of them.

The thing that lends credence to our mistaken idea that we alone are known and loved of God, while all others are outcasts

and exiles, is our refusal to circulate among them. A little acquaintance with them would prove that they respect the same Father, believe in the same Jesus, acknowledge the same Spirit, and revere the same word as ourselves. They pray the same prayers. They venerate the same day. They sing the same songs, and have written a lot of them. Surely they cannot be wholly wrong if they hold so much in common with us. It is our aloofness, our reserve and remoteness, which creates such walls between us.

We will never grow closer so long as each of us remains on our side of the barriers and occasionally lob a missile at each other. Nor can we expect them to cross the wall and come and visit us. We must seize the initiative. We must make the initial effort. Great changes and alterations which are an aftermath of everyone's experience with the Eternal, will never be known. We will continue to blast away at positions no longer held and bombard fortresses long since abandoned. We will answer questions no longer being asked. We plead for a more sensible, rational and wholesome approach to a problem of such long standing, it will require the best of all of us to resolve to the glory of God.

The mistakes of the past need not be the mistakes of the present. The legacy handed down by our fathers need not be invested and continue to draw interest if it consists of ill-gotten gains which defy the purpose of God. Let us renounce the outworn traditions which hold us throttled. Let us free ourselves from the intolerable chains which bind our hearts to perpetuate the evils of yesterday. Our fathers were part of a culture which fought and warred over all sorts of things. But just as we no longer burn candles or kerosene lamps as they did so we should not perpetuate the dim light which showed them the way they thought they must go.

We are more knowledgeable today than were our sires. We have studied the revelation of God in greater depths than they

were able to do. Let us place this knowledge at the service of God. Let us use it to stifle the party spirit and to make gains for Christ Jesus our Lord. He will be with us. He will lead us. He will be our guide. Let us move forward into the path of peace. Let our watch-word be unity. Let the oneness of the precious people of God become the motto under which we move forward. There is nothing to lose. There is everything to gain. Lead on, O King Eternal!

Nearer to Christ

Ensign 9 (January 1983): 5/165

Ensign

Charles Reed, a member of Parliament years ago, said he had, in his library, an old volume his mother had given him. It contained a description of the various sects with their diffuse doctrines. On the flyleaf his mother had drawn a picture of a wheel. She had put spokes running from the rim to the hub which bore the name "Christ." Each spoke was labeled with the name of one of the sects. Underneath she had written, "The nearer to Christ, the nearer to each other." It could be that, instead of concentrating on the unity of diverse parties what we ought to do is to seek to come nearer the heart of Jesus, to become really and a slave of His.

I want to suggest a strategy which I feel is worthy of thought. It is what I must pursue if I am to be recognized by Him. I do not say that others must follow it. All constructive efforts must here. It was this which made Anwar Sadat so great in the political realm. He did not adamantly demand that Menachem Begin come to Egypt. Banishing his own pride, he went to Israel. Without compromising his personal convictions he appeared at Camp David. He has been sorely missed on the international scene since his assassination. No one else of his stature has appeared. What he did in the political arena someone of status must do in the spiritual realm.

We have tried other means and recorded abject failure in

their pursuit. Partisan debate has made the chasm wider and driven us further apart. Conventions for discussion have backfired when someone more interested in protecting uniqueness than in promoting unity has spoken unadvisedly with his lips. What is needed is someone who will go and listen carefully and seek to understand what the other side is saying. I am persuaded that frequently we are closer together than we realize. Our ignorance has augmented the condition. Such a person must be prepared to rest under every kind of accusation from his own sect. But the gain may be worth it, seeing that he is conscientiously pursuing the plan of God for the fulness of time.

A little genuine good will manifested by someone who has swallowed his pride may accomplish what more formal approaches can never do. And that brings us to the second approach to the problem. It is recognition of the person of Christ. Please note that it is not the recognition of anything you cannot accept. It is simply the acknowledgement of the presence of Christ. It is useless to contend that Jesus is not present in the lives of those who differ with us about some things, but who confess Him in the very language of scripture. He who said, "He that is not against us is for us," must honor His word. It is not necessary to have perfect knowledge of all that God said if we are guided by what we already know. "All of us who are mature should take such a view of things, and if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained."

I personally know many among the Baptists, Nazarenes and Mennonites (for example) who live up to what they have already attained. At the same time I also know many among the Church of Christ who do not. To assume that Christ is not present with the former, but is with the latter, is to sit in judgment upon God. It is a tragedy of the deepest dye that we are divided and separated from each other by what we do not know, or by what we misunderstand, but our separation does not cancel God's promise and we need to recognize the fact and

accept each other where we are and as we are along the road of life.

We are not going to heaven in a clump, but are strung out along the road. Some of us are far back and it is a distinct struggle for us. But it is not a question of where we are, but the direction we are facing. It is not so much a matter of position as of disposition. If some of us are more astute than others the grace of God may supply what is lacking. None of us will ever make it without grace. All of us are ignorant about some things, and all of these seem inconsequential to us. They disturb others more than they disturb us. But if we think “the master is delayed in his coming and begin to beat the menservants and maidservants” we may not make it at all.

The third item is the art of restoring peace to a divided religious world is teamwork. Association, Recognition, Teamwork. The first three letters spell art, and this is the art of uniting splintered fragments in society or the church. For generations we have taken the position that if we cannot do everything with the sects, we cannot do anything with them. This has probably made us to be the most sectarian of all. It has curtailed many worthwhile social and community efforts. In Germany there is held annually a Kirchentag—a churches day. On that day the various religious groups forget their differences for one day at least, and assemble by the thousands in a great sports arena to proclaim to the whole world their united belief that Jesus Christ is Lord. Thus they demonstrate in an effective way that Jesus is superior to any of their doctrinal beliefs. At least they give personal testimony to the world of His supremacy even over their deeply-held human convictions and rationalizations. I suspect that at sunset they wend their way homeward feeling closer to Him.

Of course we always ask, “If they can do it for one day, why can’t they do it every day?” This question manifests a complete unawareness of how the mind functions. We cannot

surrender a deeply-held opinion until we are convinced it is wrong. But we can keep still about it for one day in order to demonstrate a greater and more significant belief. The fact that Jesus is the Christ is the one central truth around which all else revolves. It gives meaning to all else. It is the sun around which every other satellite-thought spins continuously. By-and-by, after deeper study and meditation one may change his mind and surrender his concept about some peripheral or secondary truth, but he cannot be expected to surrender it prematurely. All truths are equally true, but not all truths are equally important.

There are many problems which are agonizing social programs. They are not Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Assembly of God or Church of Christ problems. One of them is the drug problem. It infests our schools and affects every element of the present order. If the Presbyterian Church gets a good program of teaching and prevention going in the community, there is no use of me starting up another so “the true church” will get the glory. I can assist in the one that is being carried forward by the Presbyterians. I need not forget that in its inception “our movement” was sparked by Presbyterians who were tired of the “nitty-gritty.” I need not become tired of Presbyterians.

There is the problem of alcoholism, of suicides, of crime prevention. These are not our problems as a church exclusively. The fact is that as God looks at the whole thing we are not churches at all. Not the Presbyterians. Not the Methodists. Not the Church of Christ. We are all parties who have come about in our attempts to relate meaningfully to the eternal. Our ambitions were right while our methods have led us astray. It is time that we begin at least to work together in those areas where we have a mutual interest and concern. God will not “zap” us for getting outside of walls he did not erect and clambering over fences he did not build.

Let us, with the art of restoring unity, begin to work for

that great design and objective. Let us begin our association with humble, sincere persons who love Jesus. Let us recognize the presence of Jesus wherever it is, so we will not overlook it among ourselves. Let us team up with those who seek to honor him in their aggressive warfare against evils of every kind. Perhaps we can teach them things they ought to know. Perhaps we can learn from them things we ought to know.

The Coming Reformation (1)

Ensign 10 (February 1983): 3/183

Ensign

I rather suspect I am a born optimist. I tend always to take the most hopeful view of things. I try to be tempered and chastened by realism; but I never forget that my Father has the whole world in His hand. He is not about to let everything “go down the cosmic drain.” I think that may be why I hold the view and cherish the hope I am now about to enunciate. It is mine. You need not concur with it. I will love you just as much if you think I have rocks in my head and am rowing with one oar.

Let me preface what I am about to say by telling you I am not a premillennialist. I am not any kind of an “ist.” I realize that a stray “ist” might slip up and catch me in the dark, but I hope to shake it off in the daylight. I firmly believe that Jesus is coming again. When He does He will deliver the kingdom back to the Father. So I am not hung up on the rapture, or the tribulation. I read the bumper stickers which say: “Caution! In case of the rapture this car will be without a driver!” I proceed carefully and avoid passing because I have a sneaking notion that the present driver may be a little unaccountable.

When folks ask me if I am a pre-tribulation rapturist, or a post-tribulationist, I ask to be excused and head for the nearest restroom. I do not like to become involved in anything which requires a contrived vocabulary to discuss. Just to be real plain about it, I do not believe that Jesus will rebuild the earthly

temple in Jerusalem, become an earthly monarch, or use Jerusalem as His capital city. It doesn't "bug" me when other folks think they find those things in the sacred volume. A great many people find a lot of things in the Book which I think are not there. But I've been wrong before and can be again.

It appears to me from my observations that "the end times" furor may be a little over-emphasized. I have some ideas why everyone is gung-ho in thinking we are teetering on the brink, but this is neither the time nor place to discuss them. Obviously, I may be mistaken, and if I am God will not postpone His culminating plans just to save one of my sermon outlines. However, it seems to me rather that we are on the verge of another reformation. It will make the previous ones look like a tempest in a very small tea kettle.

Reformations are not made by men but by God. Men get credit for them but they do not deserve it. Luther was born at the time and place where he could be used of God. He was the man of the hour. So was Menno Simons, or Jan Hus, or Barton Warren Stone. The latter did not start the second great awakening, but when God caused the alarm to go off he was ready. None of them were perfect. None ever are. But God can use flawed instruments to accomplish his designs. That is the only kind available unto Him.

Jesus was critical of those who could interpret the sky but could not interpret the signs of the times. He indicated that anyone who could prognosticate weather conditions, ought to be able to grasp the significance of the portents regarding what was coming to pass. Obviously, the only way one can evaluate the sky is by a knowledge of what has always happened before, when the same conditions were manifested. The reason you can say it will be fair weather when the sky is red in the evening is because that is the kind of weather which generally follows when the sun goes down in a clear sky.

History means learning by enquiry. And there are certain things plainly indicated in our day which have established themselves as criteria in the past. They have always betokened reformation, and I rather suspect still do. I want to enumerate them. If I prove to be wrong I will probably not be around to know it. I want to mention eight things which lead me to believe that we may be standing in the gateway to a real and vital reformation.

1. *The break-up of the monolithic structure of the Roman Church.* This ponderous institution, chained to its medieval past and forced to drag along all of the outdated machinery of yesterday is in serious difficulty. No longer attuned to the needs of the present age, it is in the most serious danger it has ever faced. The members are abandoning it and young people are leaving it like rats fleeing from a sinking ship. No longer afraid of the vain anathemas of a priestcraft out of touch with a non-supportive membership they are not about to return. The church in many places is supported today by sales and fish fries for which they depend chiefly on non-Catholics to invest in.

My lot has been cast in a diocesan set-up where I can observe at first-hand what is transpiring. I was invited by the priest to teach the Bible in Holy Family Church. It is a group made up of emigrant people from southern Europe. By invitation I also spent a day locked up in a convent with 162 nuns. I was free to talk with them as I wished. I saw many of them weep as I spoke with them in the catacombs where they were working. I ate luncheon with them in the refectory which was right out of the sixteenth century. We are now teaching the Word in a number of Catholic homes. The interest is tremendous. The hunger and thirst after righteousness is astounding. A priest has been to two of these. I recently baptized a supervisor of Bell Telephone Company who had been a Catholic for all of his fifty-seven years. Fully one-fourth of our congregation were formerly from a Catholic background.

One of the most significant things I see happening is the inauguration of the “Renew” program. Every congregation in our area is enlisted in it. There is nothing compulsory about it but hundreds have signed up for it. Its logo is seen on signs in front of every Catholic Church building— a stump with a live green branch growing from it. The words “Pray For Renew” are found throughout their buildings. It is not clergy-oriented. It obligates each person to invite in three or four of his neighbors daily to read the scriptures and pray together. It is already making a profound difference. Things will never be the same again. When men cease to look for the truth in a church which consists of human beings and begin to look for it in the word of God which is divinely inspired, there will come a transformation of life.

Ten years ago, John R. W. Stott wrote:

For over four hundred years Protestants and Roman Catholics have remained in the entrenched positions into which they dug themselves at the Reformation. Just about their only contact has been to lob theological grenades at one another across a deserted no man’s land. The argument was largely restricted to the terms of the Reformation Confessions and the Decrees of the Council of Trent. The polemics on both sides have been rigid and often harsh. Those days are now over. For Rome has changed and is continuing to change, despite her claim to changelessness. As Vatican II asserted, “Christ summons the Church, as she goes on her pilgrim way, to that continued reformation of which she always has need” in so far as she has “deficiencies in conduct, in Church discipline, or even in the formulation of doctrine.”¹

We dare not ignore the opportunities which are thrust upon us by the Holy Spirit of God, for opportunities spell responsibilities as well. There has been no greater obstacle to the faith in our world and in our day than the intervention of the sprawling citadel of Rome across the path. Now that the heretics

have become the “separated brethren” it seems that we cannot miss the chance to share the love of God, devoid of sectarian tendencies with those who are still blinking their eyes in the sunlight to which they have been suddenly exposed and into which they have been thrust by circumstances beyond their control.

It is important, I think, that we be careful not to transform them from a large and bitter sect into a small and bitter one. The privileges which are ours to teach, to share, and to liberate may never come again as it has come to us. In the name of Him who prayed for all who believe in Him let us not muff the opportunity that has been granted to us to testify of His grace.

¹*Revolution in Rome*, David F. Wells, Tyndale Press, 1973, p. 7.

The Coming Reformation (2)

Ensign 11 (March 1983): 3/203

Ensign

In the previous issue of this journal I began an account of the eight things which make me believe that we are standing on the verge of another reformation. These are not the only signs, but they are enough for my purpose. God is not through with us yet. He is acting in our world and in our time in a very real and positive way. The reformation which stands poised in the doorway will be different. All of them are. No two are alike. Each of them builds upon the previous ones. This one will be universal. It will affect hearts and minds in the Orient as well as the Occident. In this article I continue with some of the reasons for my optimism.

2. *The Death of Creedalism.* When Thomas Campbell wrote his memorable document, creeds were the order of the day. Alexander Campbell debated them with their proponents, and wrote on March 7, 1825, "The records of all religious sects, and the experience of all men of observation, concur in attesting the fact that human creeds contributed always, since their first introduction, to divide and disunite the professors of the Christian religion." How times have changed. No longer do creeds hold their iron grip upon the hearts of men and women. Their fingers have been pried loose from the minds of men. Those minds have been set free. The bondage is over.

The enshrining of human opinions to be bound irrevocably

upon others has had its day and its sun is set. Conceived in fear, and begotten by partisan pride, the embodiment of deductions in propositions has run the gauntlet of opposition. It has staggered, fallen and expired before reaching its goal. Jesus is fast coming into his own. He is being proclaimed as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the Lord of life all over the land. It is true that the media pampers the desire of some to be wealthy, honored and respected, with Jesus as the drawing card. But Jesus has a way of bursting through the trappings which encase him and appearing in a glory derived only from God.

Jesus is the Good News of God! He is the message! The recounting of the facts concerning His life, death, burial and resurrection, constitute the proclamation of that good news. It is God's dynamic to heal and make whole every person who believes those facts and seeks to pattern his life after their implications. No abbreviation of the gospel, no reduction, no compilation of inferences or speculations can accomplish the purpose of God. At last this has dawned upon men. On the college campus, in the halls of Congress, in all the marts of business, prayer meetings are being held, Bible studies conducted, and the name of Jesus exalted.

In Korea, in Japan, in India, in mainland China, in Africa, in South America, fresh winds are blowing, revival breaks forth, and men bow to His sovereignty. And God is responsible for revival in the true sense. There is never a Great Awakening without God touching off the alarm on the clock of time. By satellite Jesus is announced to those who never heard his name. Without paying attention to creeds they accept Him, embrace His way of life, follow Him faithfully, sometimes unto death! The fact is that sectarianism is no longer in vogue. Jesus is being hailed as the prince of peace. He is infinitely greater than any statement about Him.

Let me recount for you the words of one from yesterday. "My aversion to human creeds as bonds of Christian union, as

conditions of Christian fellowship, as means of fastening chains upon men's minds, constantly gains strength. My first objection to them is that they separate us from Jesus Christ. . . . This is what shocks me in the creed-maker. He interposes himself between me and my Saviour. He dares not trust me alone with Jesus. He dares not leave me with the word of God. This I cannot endure." I think it is high time that we laid our creeds, written and unwritten, to rest in the cemetery of history. Man is free and will never again be enslaved.¹

3. *The Charismatic Movement.* I do not use the term "charismatic age." I do not believe in it for the simple reason that I do not believe in an uncharismatic age. God has always regulated the members of the body by means of the gifts he has bestowed in whatever way. Whatever He requires He provides the power to accomplish it. The body is divine and only a divine power can cause it to function. The dynamic which animates the body is the same power which raised Jesus from the dead. Men who rely on human plans, strategies and demonstrations will see the organizations they have fostered grow old, become inactive and inert, and eventually die. No institution governed by law alone, or dependent upon a written code can survive. Witness the passing parade of nations which have lost their former glory and gone into decay.

There have been ten occasions of spiritual outbreak since Pentecost, in which the more audible and visual demonstrations have been manifested. The current one received a great deal of emphasis from Demos Shakharian, of Southern California, and the Full Gospel Businessmen's Association International, which he helped to found. Prominent men in every department of world affairs have flown all over the globe and have testified repeatedly of what the Spirit has done to and through them. Women's auxiliary groups have sprung up and regularly meet by the thousands for prayer and exhortation. The phenomenon has affected serious persons in every denomination, including our own, throughout the world.

Is it a valid movement or not? Christians are divided on the question. Thousands say it represents a profound and powerful outpouring of the Spirit of God in our age. Others are just as convinced that they are deceived and misled. Because it has always occurred in the past when mankind has been driven into a certain position, in the world, I have thought that it is probably the result of a combination of social factors as much as anything else. To say this is to make me vulnerable to attack from those who are convinced they have been overwhelmed by the Spirit, and become filled with the power of God.

I mean no unkindness. And I am not issuing a challenge. I am not questioning the experience when I attempt to explain what I believe is its reason and source. For of one thing I am heartedly convinced, that the charismatic believers have done more to batter down silly sectarian walls of hostility than anything else which has occurred during my lifetime. And I am thrilled to find powerful men giving their testimony to the existence of my Lord. It is useless and prejudicial to say that all who practice it are inflamed with emotion. Bankers, generals of the army, heads of manufacturing concerns, and other hard-bitten men of commerce, have become imbued with love for the word of God, and with the place of prayer in their lives. It would be a little naive to say that Charles Colson is a victim of his own emotionalism.

I do not indulge the easy way so common among most of those with whom I have been raised, of saying it is attributed to the devil. I do not recall reading in the scripture where the devil motivated wives and husbands to return to the arms of each other, or sent back home straying children who had been living in sin. And although I am not a part of the charismatic movement, or any other movement, I rejoice that it has been able to convince so many thousands that faith in Jesus is of supreme importance. If it is a mistake, it is an honest one for many, and is but one more demonstration that God can use the mistakes and failures of men to accomplish His holy will and

purpose.

So I am quite convinced that the charismatic movement is doing much to batter down the barricades we have erected. It is bringing people together to testify of a mutual belief in Jesus as the Lord of life. It has penetrated into an area of life never before touched in this world of business and economic priorities. It has led mighty men captive and has brought them to kneel before God and confess their sins. So whether I am a part of it or not, I can at least hail it as working toward the goal for which I strive— the unity of all who believe in Him through the testimony of the apostles.

END NOTES

- 1. *The Works of William Ellery Channing*, vol. 2, pp. 291-92.**

The Coming Reformation (3)

Ensign 12 (April 1983): 3/223

Ensign

4. *The Youth Movement.* This is another thing which causes me to believe that we are being made ready for another great awakening by our heavenly Father. After a period of lethargic indifference through most of the 1950's, the young people made a complete reversal in the next decade. Part of it was sparked by the Vietnam War, but not all of it can be attributed to that faraway struggle. Such words as "flower children" and "hippies" invaded our language. It was a time of experimentation, much of it destructive to minds and personalities. And it received its greatest impetus, as do most cultic problems, from California. They tend to move with the prevailing winds from west to east.

Most adults had little to do with what was happening, except to condemn, but it fell my lot, unqualified as I was, to be in the thick of the fray. I was speaking at Harvard the afternoon before the sit-ins and walk-outs took place, and sat in on the meeting between the rebellious students and faculty. Eventually I was to speak on more than 250 college campuses. I stayed in three Christian communes and came to have high regard for the gentle people who composed them. They challenged everything that was said, which was good for me, since I was re-thinking the rigidity of a great many of the sectarian tendencies I had inherited and espoused.

Under the leadership of Timothy Leary, who became the Irish guru of the expanding drug culture, thousands of young people began to try to escape the nitty-gritty and polarization of life in America by ingesting chemical substances which were mind-expanding drugs. This lifted them out of life as I lived it and brought about self-induced “highs.” Some of them never recovered. Many became the victims of human wolves who lurked about to prey upon them. Others went the suicide route. But many of them quit drugs “cold turkey” and I could recount for you scores of stories of ranting, raving, screaming, wall-climbing individuals watched over in pads by their peers until they were off the stuff.

The kids next turned to sex as an escape-hatch, but it did not work. Such phrases as “the new morality” assailed our ears. But sex carried with it, as it always does when illegitimate, a latent guilt. So they went to Far Eastern religions, with their meditative and contemplative overtones. Under the leadership of “The Beatles” who were the rock idols of their day, and of Mia Farrow, the sex symbol of the age, the young people were led into Zen Buddhism and a lot of other unsatisfying screwball ideas. They were not disciplined enough to spend long hours contemplating their navels and thinking about the life forces. Finally, with nowhere else left to go, they discovered Jesus. They turned to him in droves. Thousands had no previous training in church, and some pretty bizarre religious institutions began to crop up. I never shamed any of them, knowing that they were honest, in peculiar attempts, to enthrone my Savior as Lord of life.

Young Jews were baptized into Christ. Rock bands were converted. Pot smokers and cocaine-sniffers gave up drugs. People who had been “shacking up” ceased to live in such off-beat fashion. Hundreds were baptized in the waters of the Pacific Ocean. They made the media which could not ignore, although it tried to make fun of them. At one time there were at least seventy-five “underground” Jesus newspapers in

circulation. Some of these were downright clever in their presentation of the Man of Galilee. Now all of that is gone, probably forever, but those who were part of it and inspired it, have joined “the religious Establishment” and are having profound effect upon it. The rigid, stubborn, unbending stance is giving away to the resilient attitude of those who are now in leadership roles. It is possible that most of the elderly will never realize the part played by these gentle, kind and loving people, rescued from the jaws of hell, but I do. Their influence is helping to kindle a fire which will burn in the hearts of men for generations to come. They are contributing to the drawing near of another reformation movement which will sweep the earth.

5. *Conversion of the Jews.* During the past twenty-five years there have been more Jewish converts to the Messiahship of Jesus than in two centuries before. Under the leadership of Moishe Rosen, the “Jews for Jesus” have become a force to be reckoned with. And these are not older people who have been led to accept Jesus because of the kindness shown to them by their Christian contemporaries. They are brilliant, erudite, talented young men and women, university-trained, and breathless about their discovery. They have taken their cause to the streets, and with some of the most potent and appropriate literature ever developed, they have pleaded their cause.

I have personally baptized more Jewish college students in ten years of appearance on the campus than in all of my previous preaching experience. Many of these were medical students. Some were engineers. Some were research scientists. And I have watched them grow and seriously develop into servants at work in the vineyard. I can see the providence of God manifested that this should occur in this day. The fact that there are more Jewish believers than at any time since Pentecost is a fact of great significance. Surely we live in marvellous times when God’s grace is being envisioned by all generations.

6. *The Proliferation of Versions of the Bible.* Many of my

friends and brethren, nourished on the King James Version, or having sucked the paps of the American Standard, tremble with fear and gnash their teeth at new versions in the English language. I do not share their fright. I do not indulge in their expressions of woe. As I look at, and read some of their reviews of contemporary editions, it becomes apparent that it is their sectarian bias which they would protect. Let the word be translated into the language of the masses. The right to translate the word is not the work of a special few in a special age. It is an ongoing work, and one in which any qualified person can engage. Let the truth be known in the vernacular of the people. We have nothing to lose.

I am quite convinced that any honest heart can find the will of God for his life in any version made by scholars who love the truth and who have sought to bring it to the surface. A dishonest heart will not find it in any version. And any doctrine or dogma which must rely upon one version exclusively for its propagation will probably turn out to be a doctrine of men rather than a revelation of God. I want to pay tribute to those who have devoted their lives to the translation into the language, dialects and vernaculars of those who have never before had a Bible, and sometimes not even a written language. And I admit that I am perturbed and upset by those who spend their time after a version has been produced nit-picking around over it to find something they can zero in on and throw the whole work out.

The circulation of the Word in so many languages which never heard it before gives me real courage. The message is truly going out to all mankind. The Word is going forth to the end of the world. Native people in jungle fastnesses, dressed only in breech clouts, and with bones thrust through their noses, are hearing the Bible read eagerly and freely, and are coming under its mitigating influence. If it were not for our frightful and insidious divisions which currently exist among those who take the Book to them, "the world might soon believe that God has

sent His Son.” What a price we pay for our division. The cost is a lost world!

But be of good cheer. That will be remedied. God is opening up doors. Some of them are great doors and effectual. Every nation, tribe and tongue will some day be exposed to the power and dynamic of the Word. Sectarianism will disappear. Traditionalism will fold its tents like the Arabs and silently steal away. Songs of praise will be lifted from thousands of throats although in different languages. The name of Jesus will reverberate from sea to sea. Righteousness will cover the earth. Get ready for it, because reformation is coming. It is sparked by a thousand different things. God still reigns.

The Coming Reformation (4)

Ensign 1 (May 1983): 3/3

Ensign

7. *The Role of Music.* There has never been a successful revolution or reformation in which music did not play a prominent part. Whether the desired end of the reform or campaign was good or bad it has been carried forward on the wings of song. The American Revolution had its “Yankee Doodle.” The Civil War had its “Dixie” and “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.” World War I sent its men away to the stirring strains of “Over There.” In between these there are songs of love and romance, but when the time has come for deep dedication of life, song writers become busy in penning words of patriotic and marital fervor.

Martin Luther knew this. He was a strong and massive personality who could not be diverted from his purpose by fear or argument. And he knew that the German mind could not be led into the path of change by Gregorian chants any more than it could by singing Brahm’s Lullaby. So he began to visit the bierstubes, or taverns, with which he was already familiar and which were almost universally patronized. He listened to the songs which provided good cheer and returned home to write Jesus words to the tunes. He turned a generation on and motivated the peasants to start marching for Jesus.

One who knows his history can be fairly certain that he is standing on the brink of a spiritual breakthrough when the old

song forms are supplemented by the new. And that is abundantly true of the present. The age of revolt was ushered in by the rock and roll era. It had a sensuous appeal which was predominant. It was brash, blatant and blowsy. It frightened a lot of people out of their wits who had forgotten “the hobble skirt” and the “mini-skirt” era which had their day and passed away. A lot of preachers took to their sacred precinct, the pulpit, and waved their arms and lifted their voices, denouncing the music. They generally served only to alienate the young, drive them from the church, and to augment growing friction with their parents who resented having their ears assailed by the strange and alien beat.

I said little but waited God’s time. Sure enough it came. We began to baptize whole rock bands. One was in Wisconsin and they went home and wrote new words to the tunes. We went back to Presidents Hall at the university and filled it to overflowing. Kids sat on the floor and stood around the edges of the room. The band played forty minutes. I answered questions for an hour, they played fifteen minutes more and we ended baptizing several of the students and two professors. The pale Galilean had conquered once more.

The magnitude of what was happening struck me at Belmont Avenue congregation in Nashville, Tennessee. It was composed of a group of folk who had begun to march to the sound of a different drummer several years before. They had been wiped “off the slate” by “faithful” Churches of Christ in the city and Don Finto was looked at as a fanatic and “Jesus freak” because he insisted on walking on the same side of the fence as did Jesus. The congregation meets on Music Row. It is just a block or two from the great recording studios which have made the town famous. A number of those connected with the contemporary scene are members of the congregation. The last time I was there they had special song sheets with scores of numbers featuring the exact words of the prophets, the psalmist, and even the One whom they had foretold.

Everywhere I go new songs fill the air. Whole new books are being produced. And when you see this phenomenon, lift up your hearts for reformation draweth nigh. And redemption accompanies it. It has never failed. But this time it is especially significant, both because of the profusion of new songs and because of their deep devotional and spiritual quality. Many of them are being composed and sung by young people hardly out of their teens. We are merely waiting in the wings for the drama to unfold. The actors are on stage. The initial set is ready to start. Praise the Lord, and again I say, praise His name.

8. *The Global Village Concept.* We are living in another “fulness of the times.” Things are beginning to come together as never before in history. It is almost impossible for one puny brain to take them all in. It is an age of computer technology, of space satellites, and communication is almost instantaneous. Even our weather is predicted by spinning earth-made global orbs rotating through space beyond human sight. The earth itself is no longer a huge rolling ball which one could not encircle in half a lifetime. I can go to far-away places with much more ease and in less time than it used to take to go to the county-seat. I can climb aboard a plane and encircle the globe and be back almost before I am missed. We are on a global village.

And with all of this, knowledge is spreading. Nations are marching to the fore which once lagged far behind. Japan was once the copy-cat of the world but has emerged in its latent originality to take the leadership in production of automobiles, motorcycles, cameras and computers. They have robots which can do things that men with brains cannot. Who has not bought a shirt recently to find from the label that it was made in Hong Kong or Korea? Suddenly places that were out of our scope of intelligence when I was a boy are becoming like one of our distant states. And with the spread of our know-how and genius somehow Jesus is finding his way into hearts halfway around the globe.

On the television screen in the evening we can see scenes of what transpired in catastrophic form in Irak, Zambia or Formosa that morning. We can dial the telephones of our friends across oceans and talk to them directly in minutes. And the knowledge of God is covering the earth like the waters cover the seas. And, like those waters, it is powerful and irresistible. Think of what is happening in Seoul, Korea, where one congregation has gathered 225,000 Christians who meet in thousands of homes and gather all night long to pray together on Friday nights.

Think of the twenty-million Christians who surfaced in China since the bamboo curtain was run up a little way to let in a little light. If communism with its cruel persecution could not stamp out of men's hearts the faith in Jesus as Lord, why do you think that crime, vandalism, racial prejudice and the hate of little people can do so in the United States. Think of what is happening in Japan, in Burma, and even in Russia. In Africa there is the greatest tidal wave of the Christian faith sweeping over the country that has ever been known. The Dark Continent is no longer dark. "They that sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light has sprung up." And this has happened in spite of famine, fear and flood.

It is no time for pessimism which is anti-Christian. It erodes our ability to work. It acts as if God has grown old and become senile and powerless. It renders us hopeless and despondent. Never before in our history have we seen such an opportunity. We should avail ourselves of it, and wring every drop of value from it. It may not come again. The Spirit has gone before us. He is our vanguard. He carries the banner on which is written "The King of kings." So strengthen the feeble knees and lift up the hands that fall down.

It is in this day that we should say, "Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare his doings among all the people, make

mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things; this is becoming known in all the earth.” Instead of bowing your head like a bulrush and criticizing every discovery of science as if it were wrung out by Satan, look at it from the constructive standpoint. It is helping to make the world a global village. It is making it possible for us to reach those who have not known him in the past. Praise God for every scientific discovery which broadens our horizons and increases the scope of our vision.

Breaking The Shell

Ensign 2 (June 1983): 4/24

Ensign

The way of the transgressor is hard! And the way of the reformer is not soft! A reformer cuts across the grain. He seeks to re-mould that which automatically sags back into the shape it has long occupied immediately upon release of tension. People are resistant to change. We like the familiar, the well-known, the stereotyped. Habit has a strange and magnetic attraction for us. We confuse wallowing in the old ruts with walking in the old paths. And that is true whether the reform be personal, political, social, economic, or religious. All growth is merely change.

John and Edmund Cartwright were born in England. They were about thirty-five when the American Revolution began. Edmund began as a preacher. A visit to a spinning-mill turned him into an inventor. He developed a power loom but was violently opposed by the workers who feared for their jobs. One mill with four hundred machines was set on fire. It burned to the ground. Cartwright worked with Robert Fulton in developing the steamship. By 1797 he invented a machine which operated on alcohol. He was mocked and laughed at constantly. The world is just beginning to awaken to the possibility of alcohol as a fuel source in our day.

John Cartwright became a lawyer. He took his stand with the American colonies. In 1774 he wrote "American Independence the Glory and Interest of Great Britain." He was denounced openly. He did not falter or flinch. He worked for universal suffrage, use of the secret ballot, the improvement of natural defences, and the liberties of Spain and Greece. In 1813 he was arrested for plain speaking, and in 1820 was indicted and fined for sedition. But he came to be known as "The Father of Reform." Almost everything he advocated came to pass. A reformer must "learn to labor and to wait."

One generation casts stones at its prophets. The next gathers them up and builds monuments of them. The first weeps because it cannot get along with them. The second weeps because it cannot live without them. The word cannot remain static. We cannot always retreat from reality. The old Chinese proverb is true that "He who spits into the wind spits in his own face." Woodrow Wilson said, in 1913, "The man who is swimming against the stream knows the strength of it."

Every age may need reformation, but not every age is ready for it. In 1110, Peter de Bruys appeared in Languedoc, in the south of France, "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, and exerting the most laudable efforts to reform the abuses and remove the superstitions which disfigured the beautiful simplicity of the gospel worship." He was burnt at St. Giles, in 1130, by the clergy who resented this new and intrepid reformer. Sometimes the world is not as ready for reform as the reformer is. Knowing that men live but once the reformer must heed the call before death summons. Other ages are crying for reform.

We believe this age is like that. It is tired of the trampling of the courts. It is sick of the weary round of meaningless ritual and liturgy. It is fed up with sermonizing, sacerdotalism and

sacrilege. It has been filled to satiety with papers whose editors have assumed the stance of “little tin gods.” It is fed up with their issuance of decretals, pronouncements and anathemas. Change is in the air. It is true that those who seek to call us back to the “lifestyle of the second mile” are still attacked, but it is by toothless lions whose fangs have long since been extracted.

It is impossible to fulfill our task by grinding out the same old grist. The lukewarm attitude of many still makes God vomit. What honor accrues to the Prince of peace from a congregation of a thousand well-dressed worshipers where less than a score of individuals ever serve in any way but by dishing out money, which is only a medium of exchange upon the bargain counters of commerce? Yet, many of these could be converted by men of vision into active participants in kingdom matters if only they were pointed to the way and told how to walk in it.

Instead we make them slaves of a system and victims of a vendetta. And the tragedy of a System is that those who do the most to keep the wheels turning are the first to become paralyzed. Many are doomed by doubts. All function through fear. Often, the higher one goes in the estimate of the manipulators, the lower he falls in his own eyes. He becomes ashamed to live and afraid to die. But it does not need to be thus. It can only be so long as one submits to being a cog in the gears of the Machine. A cog is always synchronized with others. When they move he moves. When they stop he stops. We are called to be members of a body and not parts of a machine which has neither heart nor soul, and continues to operate without either.

The body has allowed itself to be encrusted in a shell of organization and institutional barriers. The life has been held down, held up and held back by the shell which effectively wraps around it. But it is now ready to burst forth. It will manifest itself in new forms. It will embody new ideals and embrace new

ideas. No one is so foolish as to argue that we have exhausted the revelation of heaven. When we come to die it will be with some truth still unlearned. No skeletal hand reaching from the grave can guide the family of God. Our fathers were great men. They were good men and gentle, but they were ignorant of many things as are we their offspring. We were taught by imperfect men, and those whom they taught were imperfect. Humility seems to be the golden key which will open the door to greater enlightenment.

If we were to ask almost any place what the most serious problem is today the answer, if honest, would be the same. It is apathy. The word literally means “without feeling.” And it is not just apathy on the part of the world. It also affects the congregation of believers. What has transpired to cause it? The answer is obvious. There can be no feeling for one another where there is no community. The world, in its urbanization, has been shoving and thrusting people closer together and has just about brought about the death of community. Without community there can be no communication. And without that, regardless of how power-packed a message may be it falls flat as a pancake.

Years ago, there was closeness which was real and not forced. People clung to each other out of need. When my uncles married, my grandfather, who was an immigrant with ideas right out of the old country, gave them each forty acres from his farm. Each time one of them got married all of the rest joined with him in erecting a new house. Soon there was a little community, a tribe, where there had been but a single family before. And they were close. On Sundays everyone was together, sharing food and conversation. When one became ill the others took turn “sitting up” through the night, giving medicine and bathing the fevered brow. Now with hospitals and medical centers, one who is ill is taken out of the community. And frequently the nearest neighbors do not know, nor actually

really care what happens.

Meanwhile the religious center, like the hospital, has taken on institutional aspects. Small wonder that people go at stated times, perform their ritual, deposit their financial gifts, and hurry home to wait until the next meeting. But sometimes there is a revolution. That is what I sense as happening now. It is not attributable to the older staid and conventional members who would be content to stagger along and allow the body of Christ to tumble into the grave with their own body. It is young men and women who are sparking renewal. They are lighting the fire. Praise the Lord. That is better than throwing cold water on the fire.

Sharing Life

Ensign 5 (September 1983): 7/87

Ensign

Years ago our fathers made a tragic error. It has dogged our steps until this day. It has expanded and grown larger. Today it clouds our whole spiritual perspective. It will continue to be an albatross hanging about our necks until we renounce it and fling the stinking carcass away from us. Historically, we did not begin thus. Our problem began when ambitious leaders were faced with an option. Unfortunately, they made the wrong choice. We became saddled with a yoke that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

As usually happens with the passing of time “the chickens are coming home to roost.” We have remained a small sect among large ones. Now we are threatened with extinction. We are fast becoming an endangered species. We are paying a high price for clinging to a wrong choice of pioneer men and women. Confronted with freedom or conformity as a basis of fellowship they chose conformity. In so doing they converted the love letters of the apostles into a written legal code. The grace of God was flushed down the drain. Leaders soon began to assert their authority. As always happens, they began to interpret the constitution. Their interpretation became the supreme law of the sect. Unfortunately, the interpretations did not agree. They never do. So the body was divided.

All of this was the result of fear— blind, sectarian fear.

Every sect that has ever been born was begotten by fear. Our own shares a common heritage with the rest of them. The far-reaching and fateful decision to hinge fellowship in Christ upon legalism was a mere blind for the desire to control the thinking of men. Our minds could be trusted. Theirs could not. We had to have a whip with which we could beat them into submission. They had to be driven back into the fold. There was no room for stray thoughts or stray sheep. Minds had to be controlled. Thinking had to be regimented.

Where did we go wrong? We hinged fellowship upon knowledge and not upon faith and love. And knowledge puffs up. It is love which builds up. Fellowship is “the sharing of a common life.” In the spiritual realm as John reminds us in his first epistle, it is eternal life we share. That life was manifested in a person. It could be heard, seen, scrutinized and felt. It was the Word of God which was with the Father from the beginning. That life was manifested in the only way that any life can be manifested unto others— that is in a person. And those who saw and heard eternal life declared Him unto us that we might share the life with them, even as they shared it with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ.

Fellowship is a participation in the transcendent life. It is not something we achieve by arriving at a superior or exalted state of knowledge. We can never receive it by knowing things. We can never attain it by doing things. Life does not consist of the possession of things we can count, or of which we may boast. It is a gift. “And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.” No one can think sublimely enough to come into possession of it. That is why it was invested in one who could talk, walk, see, and be a partaker of our lot, so we could be encouraged to become a participant in his nature.

This is what the inspired record is all about. It is a revelation, a divine disclosure, an unfolding of the divine mind.

The record is that God has given to us eternal life. It is a bestowal of heaven, a gift from on high. This life is in his Son. Just as the word became incarnate in Jesus, it becomes incarnate in me. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life. This divides the rational world of mankind into two classes. Those who open up their hearts to Jesus, share in the wonder, the glory, and the beauty of eternal life. Fellowship is the relationship shared by the universal community of those who have invited Jesus to dwell in their hearts to deliver them from sin and direct their lives.

It is not something we extend or withdraw. Instead, it is a state in which we share. It is not a grant of man but a gift of God. It did not originate in the mind of man but in the mind of God. He had to have it before he could give it. It was precisely because it belonged to him that he could bestow it upon us. It is part of our relationship with the family, and the family did not originate with us but with the Father. It was disclosed in writing to those who believe on the name of the Son of God. It was done so that they might know they have eternal life, and believe on the name of the Son of God.

Notice the language employed. It is important. The term “know” does not generally mean to acquire knowledge of factual material to be filed away in the brain. It carries with it in the Biblical usage the concept of experience. God wants us to experience eternal life, to share in the joy, to know the satisfaction and fulfillment it brings. At the same time he wants us to believe in the name of the Son of God. The word “name” implies much more than a distinctive title. O. S. Rankin, Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature and Theology at New College, University of Edinburgh, says, “In the thought of the ancient world a name does not merely distinguish a person from other persons, but is closely related to the nature of the bearer.”

So to believe in the name of the Son of God carries with it

the idea of his whole personality as embraced in the character, reality and authority of his person. It means to share in the grace and power which belong to Jesus as the Son of God. We are not only heirs of God, but we are joint-heirs with Jesus. Note the difference between “know” and “believe” in this verse. We trust in the character and authority of Jesus as we embrace the gift of eternal life. This may be difficult for us to grasp but it is of tremendous value to realize it.

Unfortunately because of their mind-set, the brethren began to think of fellowship as something they could control or dominate. This was influenced by the cultural pattern in which they were reared. It originated from a kind of arrogance derived from the mistaken idea that they alone were objects of God’s grace. They were the kingdom of heaven. They spoke of withdrawing fellowship as though it were something they could manipulate. Often they went through the motion of dismissing from their number one who was a credit to themselves. Frequently such a person had a favor conferred upon him by their action. He was better off on the outside than he was on the inside where he had to forfeit his freedom to other men.

The mistake was made because of a confusion of association or company with fellowship. There can be no fellowship without association but the two are not the same. We are in the fellowship with thousands whom circumstances do not allow us to associate with, and we associate with many with whom we are not in the fellowship. Fellowship is an involuntary gift of God in which we share; association is the sharing voluntary with others of our fellowmen. God is the author of fellowship, but we associate or company together because of proximity or for other reasons.

One who does not properly conduct his life can be dismissed from the association or participation in congregational affairs, but only God, who is the bestower of fellowship can retract it. Men often make mistakes. They may withdraw their

association from one whom God continues to recognize. We are not authorized to become his vice-regents. We are not popes or prelates. We have not been delegated the power to arbitrarily dismiss from the fellowship those who believe on the name of the Son of God. It is too easy for us to be deceived. It will serve the interests of His cause more fully if we love one another with pure hearts fervently.

The Amsterdam Conference (1)

Ensign 6 (October 1983): 3/103

Ensign

The International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists, held in Amsterdam, was the first of its kind in the history of the Christian faith. It must be considered in proper perspective to be understood. I am not sure about the validity of the name. It implies that there are other kinds of evangelists besides “itinerants.” But the scholarship of the world challenges this. Apparently when the Holy Spirit made and endowed evangelists they were all itinerant. They wandered, or were hounded and driven, from place to place. It is only in our day with its blatant admixture of things spiritual and secular that we have come up with the idea that one can “settle down upon his lees” and still do the work of an evangelist for a stated and stipulated fee.

But the almost 5,000 who attended generally qualified according to the new covenant scriptures. Most of them went from village to village sharing the Good News with all who would listen. Those from countries not dominated by that twentieth century heresy, Marxism, spoke frequently in the open, on street corners, on village squares, or under spreading trees. I met hundreds of them, and in informal sessions shared with them many of the things I had learned. I also profited from listening to their many and diverse experiences in remote jungles which they penetrated with the tidings of Calvary. Some of them had “lost everything and yet were spurned and ill-treated by a world that was too evil to see their worth. They lived as vagrants

in the desert, on the mountains, or in caves and holes in the ground.” Some of them wore the only pair of trousers and the only coat they possessed. I was glad they could be helped from the Samaritan’s Purse which distributed clothing to every man as he had need. Only one collection was taken. It was distributed among those who were in poverty.

The immediate impression was one of desperate earnestness about the task at hand. A large room was set aside for prayer. I never walked through it without seeing a score of young and old men from the far-flung regions of the earth, beseeching and imploring God. Some of them were visibly weeping. Loneliness had overtaken them. They were weary with new found learning. Some were entreating with loud groans. I had an inclination to place my arms about their shoulders and try to comfort them, but the signs cautioning against talking or conversing made it impossible. Besides they had access to a Comforter whom I also needed. I was especially moved one day to find twelve young men from Madagascar, each with his Bible under his head, face down, talking to God one by one and praying for each other.

As one gained entrance to the great sprawling RAI Center, the first thing he saw was a huge globe suspended from the ceiling. Large Banners running out from it in four directions each bore the inscription, “Do the work of an evangelist.” For ten days and nights that was the theme. It dominated the platform every morning and evening, and all of the 120 workshops in between. The meaning of the word “disciple” was continually under discussion. The idea was held out that every convert should be equipped to convert others.

The necessity of cutting through the thickets and undergrowth which had grown up in the minds of modern men were continually emphasized. Workshops were dedicated to providing instruction for every known problem. These were conducted by those who had been outstandingly successful in

their fields, regardless of their current partisan allegiance. They dealt with everything from Far Eastern cults to those hatched out in the fertile, but misguided, brains of some of our modern thinkers. Men reared in the Islamic tradition told of what had changed their minds. Former Buddhists, Hari Krishnas, and followers of Moon, testified of the grace of God which had rescued them. Many who came from behind the Iron Curtain related their encounters and told of their triumphs over a threatening and throttling political bureaucracy. Hope sprang up in our breasts as they talked.

It soon became apparent that what was developing was a universal strategy against “the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities and cosmic forces of this dark age.” The meeting was a Declaration of War on a worldwide scale. It was the firing of the first shot into the fortress of the Evil One. Never again could he overrun the camp of the saints on any part of the globe. This earth, created by God, and robbed of the righteousness which should have characterized it, would no longer be surrendered without a struggle.

You may ask me how I felt about going to such a meeting. It has been asked by many. But they do not know how free I am. Never again will I ask the permission of anyone who did not die for me where I can go and to whom I may listen. I went with a little reluctance because I had been a hostage so long. One who is a hostage becomes frightened at anything new or strange. A noise at night will make him quickly open his eyes and lie in the darkness almost afraid to breathe. I soon realized that everyone else had been a hostage also. That is what sectarianism does to us. I soon got over it and began to see the wonderful opportunity which had been extended to one as unworthy as myself to share. I began to regret that my pride, stubbornness and fear had separated me from such a learning experience in years gone by.

The approach of the New Reformation which I have seen,

and to which I have been testifying for five or six years, could be seen more clearly now. I could see the cloud the shape of a man's hand which betokened an abundance of rain after the long drouth. The fact that it was given impetus by those outside our own ranks no longer troubled me. We never began a reformation in history. We have always been "heirs" of one, but never the inaugurators. There is a real reason why one of us could never start one. Because of our legalistic stance we have always fractured and fragmented them, whether begun by Luther or by Thomas the gentle and unassuming Presbyterian. We have coined such mottos as "They shall not pass!" And we have stood with a raised meat-axe ready to cut down to size anyone who dared to think for himself.

Strangely enough, I never heard a mention of the sectarian spirit in the ten days at Amsterdam. I was not unaware of the allegiance of those present, although it was never found on identification badges or anywhere else. The focus was upon Jesus as Lord. The exaltation was of the Son of God as Lord. Personal views and preferences faded into the background as Jesus was elevated to the central spot. There was no emphasis upon what our group is doing for Christ, no words of background, headquarters or denominational structures. There was no partiality shown. No one changed or altered his presentation to take a left-handed cut at someone else. The man from the lowliest station in life was equal to one to whom deference was shewn back home.

It was breath-taking to see the march of the flags on opening night. There were 134 persons, each from a different country, who marched down the long aisle and placed his flag in a special holder behind the speaker's stand and along the rear wall. The flags were uniform in size. They were presented alphabetically. The one for Great Britain did not take precedence over those from Surinam or Sri Lanka. They graced the hall throughout the whole event. They were complemented by huge banners, cleverly designed and brightly painted. One

was hung at every session. Some of them read as follows: I will be clear in my message— I must be sure I am cleansed— I must be sure that I communicate— I must be filled with the Holy Spirit— I must be a servant of the church— I must train others to share their faith— I must nurture new believers— I must be faithful to my family.

There were two groups who were indispensable. One of these was composed of the 400 stewards, mostly young college people, and from every part of the globe. I had a rare time talking to those from Belgium, West Germany, France, South America, India and Canada. They had been trained to perfection and were stationed in every hotel occupied by guests, at information centers, in dining halls, and in the aisles of the convention center. Models of courtesy and concern, and speaking English flawlessly, they were a real blessing.

The other group consisted of 78 translators whose names read like a lexicon of tribes, tongues, and nations. Some of these were proficient in as many as five languages. They had majored in linguistics, either in school, or on the field. The translation was simultaneous. It evoked the admiration of all who were dependent upon it. I marveled one day to hear a man translate into Russian, Polish, and Arabic, the words spoken in English. I realized my own shortcomings.

One thing that did not escape my attention was the fact that we had several hundred present who claimed to have been baptized with the Holy Spirit. But one did not hear it emphasized, and “the Pentecostal experience” was not once mentioned. It was interesting to see that those who “spoke in tongues” had to go and secure the contraption to fasten to their ears in order to know what was going on. They were smart enough to realize that in order to speak in every man’s language in which he was born, it was necessary to study it. There was no shortcut. I watched the “rug jerked out from under their claims” although I am persuaded the Spirit was present in the

meetings.

I think that such gatherings of multi-national origin will do more toward making the experiences of people be relegated to the proper place than almost anything else. It was a clear demonstration that “the Pentecostal experience” cannot be captured again, and never will. It was a one-time thing which occurred at the birthday of the church of God. You only have one birthday. The anniversaries are occasions in which you look back upon it and rejoice.

The Amsterdam Conference (2)

Ensign 7 (November 1983): 3/123

Ensign

It is my eager hope that you will not become bored by what I say with regard to the International Conference of Itinerant Evangelists. From start to finish, this mammoth gathering made it obvious that it had assembled to learn. With few exceptions all of the speakers were instructors. The “how to” was always emphasized. The program was designed to provide times of inspiration and worship, times of teaching and learning, times of fellowship and prayer, and times for sharing the faith with those who had not heard it. The conference was not called simply to bring together those who could enjoy one another’s company. It was designed to train, encourage and minister to them so that they might, with greater efficiency, take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

That it succeeded is evidenced by the letters I am receiving from men in Africa, India, Sri Lanka, Laos, Australia and other remote parts of the earth. I promised all of them I would mail them copies of my books if they would write me. They are doing so in ever increasing numbers. But without fail, each one tells me how he is employing in native villages the principles which were enunciated in Amsterdam. Men who go barefoot in their own land are taking the Good News to their own people.

The first morning speaker was Sir Marcus Loane of Warrawee, Australia. A former archbishop of the Anglican

Church in “the land down under” he had also served as principal of Moore Theological College. I had just read one of his books before I went over to Europe. One would have thought that if he was to hear a profound message, couched in theological verbiage, it would have been from one who had been “knighted.” He spoke after a soul-rendering prayer by a Philippine youth worker. But Sir Marcus placed everyone at ease and hewed to the line. Pointing out that men do not recognize truth at the point of its greatest significance, which is sin, he affirmed that, by going astray at this juncture, we had brought ourselves to a place of perpetual loneliness, sadness and depression.

He pointed out that Paul lived in the same kind of world. Violence stalked the streets of the Roman empire. Conspiracies and assassinations were commonplace. Immorality was indulged as a way of worshiping the gods. Rape was prevalent. Society had declared bankruptcy with reference to the social graces. Plunging into Romans 1:16 he pointed out that the power of the gospel which could save was looked upon as the story of failure. It was simply the tale of another criminal who was tacked to a cross. And he pointed out that they not only crucified him, but made fun of him while he was struggling with his final gasps. They mocked him, saying, “He saved others, himself he cannot save.” And they were right. He came to die that others might live. Sir Marcus challenged those who were present to take that message in its starkness without smoothing it over or sugarcoating it for the world today.

He was followed by Stephen Olford, currently president of Encounter Ministries, a universal outreach organization. For fourteen years he had been the preacher at Calvary Baptist Church in New York. Prior to that he served a congregation at Richmond, Surrey, England. He was born in Africa. He defined an evangelist as one possessing a natural endowment and a spiritual denouement, with a passion for the lost in the presence of God. An evangelist, he said, is one with a gift, a task, and an

aim, and who never forgets either in the world, the church or the home. Much stress was laid upon the home life of the preacher.

With these two men the day sessions were launched. They never let down in quality. They were followed by a thirty-minute break, during which a sandwich and a cup of coffee or tea were provided to the almost five thousand who were present. One of the 107 workshops then began. These were divided into two kinds— designated and optional. They were conducted by men who were specialists in their fields. They covered every phase of world evangelism from “The Evangelist’s Family Life” to “Open Air Preaching.” Among the seven I chose was one entitled “Using Apologetics in A Non-Christian Background.” The lecturer was Dr. Ravi K. Zacharias. Born in India, he had a profound influence in his native land as well as in Cambodia and Vietnam. He holds the chair of evangelism and contemporary thought at Alliance Theological Seminary in New York.

The workshop was suited to my needs. It answered many of my questions about how to approach Buddhists, Shintoists and Muslims, and pointed out mistakes commonly made by the uninitiated. The next day, I had selected a workshop conducted by Josh McDowell. I had read three of his books before leaving home in preparation. The “homework” stood me in good stead. All of the workshops but one were excellent. They provided opportunity for talk back to the conductors and for exchange of ideas. In the one which “bombed out” the speaker got off his subject completely and began to tell about how much money he had made, and had to have in order to make a success. I objected to the workshop in the written analysis which all of us turned in.

The late afternoons were free until dinner time at 5:30 o’clock. Arrangements had been made with KLM, the Dutch National Airlines, to prepare almost 5,000 meals daily in their airline kitchens. The meals were substantial although they ran heavy toward rice. They were served with efficiency. The entire

convention was fed in about thirty minutes. I took full advantage of the opportunities afforded in the afternoons and at dinner to meet as many different people as possible. There were six at each table and I managed to eat with a new group at each meal. Currently I am writing to those who have written to me, sending them books and papers which I hope will aid them. The names are from every country in Europe, Asia and Africa. The people are hungering and thirsting for the word. I am resolved that they shall be filled to the extent I can be used.

Some of them are most interesting. One works in the hostels in South Africa where the diamond miners are housed for nine months at a time. Another is laboring with the Masai tribe and has killed three lions with his spear when attacked. Still another is engaged in telling three villages about Jesus. All of the inhabitants are Muslims. He has been stoned and once was arrested and imprisoned with nothing to eat or drink for four days. Another who wrote me asking for my books daily teaches little children under a spreading banyan tree. It is the only school available for many miles.

Some funny things happened because of cultural differences. In order to house all of those who attended arrangements had to be made for many hotels in Amsterdam. Some of the men from the hinterlands had never really eaten at a table and had never been in a hotel. When the first luncheon was served the people at the Marriott and Hilton were treated to a table full of folk who took up their soup bowls and loudly slurped from them. When it was announced they could make themselves at home in the lobby, they appeared barefoot, having discarded the uncomfortable shoes which confined feet unaccustomed to them.

I was amazed to see some of them who began Bible studies and group prayer meetings in the lobbies, greatly to the consternation of worldly hotel managers who could only wring their hands as strangely-dressed men prayed for them and

buttonholed other guests to see what they thought of Jesus. It was worth the cost of the trip over to watch men who spoke five or six different languages all seeking for some means of conversing. But the genuine love that gleamed from their eyes made up for lack of words. Being one of the oldest men in attendance, several hundred quietly adopted me as “their grandfather away from home” and were always surrounding me to talk and learn.

The movie “Jesus” was shown almost continuously in the afternoons. It is a powerful presentation in 68 languages. It is soon due to be translated into 271. Filmed in Israel, the two hour movie is based on Luke’s record. Every word spoken by Jesus is taken directly from the scriptures. During the past few years it has been shown in towns and villages throughout the globe. Men and women on motorcycles, and on horseback, have taken it to remote areas of the earth showing it on portable projection equipment. The film “The Prodigal” was also shown one afternoon, as was the life of Corrie Ten Boom, who had died shortly before the conference opened. These enforced the fact that one of the most effective ways open to us in this generation is that of visual aids. We recall what we see better than what we hear.

The Amsterdam Conference (3)

Ensign 8 (December 1983): 3/143

Ensign

To those who question the wisdom of taking so much time and space to record the events surrounding the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists, held in Amsterdam, I have but one reply. I consider it one of the tangible and significant contributions to the coming reformation which is standing just outside the door, waiting for admittance. When it comes it must be of world-wide impact in this day of universal communication, or it will never get off the ground and become airborne. We now live in a global village and anything that is purely national will not fly.

It must affect the Orient as well as the Occident. Precious people in the Far East, as well as the Near East and West must all be touched. And it is interesting to note what is happening in the former rice paddies of the world to hasten the day. We may yet live to see the time when we recognize that the tortuous war fought in the steaming jungles of Vietnam was not a useless struggle, but an instrument God could use to stir up the nest and shake loose people who were bound to their native land and to transport them to other parts of the world where the old gods and the old customs no longer dominated their lives.

Right in the midst of all this, when the largest church on earth is in Korea, when millions of Christians came out of the woodwork in mainland China, when Japan and India have

begun to show a lively interest in the claims of Jesus, the international convention was called. The timing was perfect. It was the first of its kind since Jesus set foot on the earth two thousand years ago. It was held in his honor. It could never have occurred before. Planes bearing the insignia of many parts of the earth converge on Schiphol air terminal. Dutch LLM planes cleave the skies to most of the great centers of the world.

Four thousand men and women, representing 134 nations, speaking a welter of different tongues, attired in colorful costumes, turned their faces steadfastly toward the mammoth RAI center, covering the space of many football fields, and for ten days, from early morning until late at night were thrown together with others interested in the same Person. In addition, a thousand others representing the press of the world were busily engaged behind the scenes sending out dispatches and mailing out news coverage. A daily newspaper was published for the benefit of the attendees alone.

I was personally interviewed by a reporter from West Germany and by another from Austria. Regularly I was thrown into the company of a man from Toronto who has been with the Billy Graham organization for a number of years. Each morning as we had breakfast together we talked for a half hour about the changing world scene, and the part that the King of kings will play in it. People were brought together who might never have met. And they came together in the most favorable circumstances. Each day four of them huddled together to pray for one another. Sometimes the words were not distinguishable but one could tell by the fervency that he was being prayed for.

It was no place for an introvert or a "loner." The polyglot population would not allow you to be withdrawn. Their eager and almost childish questions like so many human corkscrews were designed to draw you out of your bottle. The only thing everyone had in common was Jesus, and everyone was interested in Him. I was astonished at the lack of sectarian emphasis. And I

was agreeably surprised at the fact that Jesus was supreme. Finally, I came to the conclusion that one had to be a professional to be a dyed-in-the-wool sectarian. And these people were not professional clergymen. How to get the message out that the earth was the visited planet, and the visit was by one from beyond outer space, was the theme of enquiry by the eager thousands.

Amsterdam is a city of the flesh. Sex shops selling all kinds of erotic devices, contrivances and materials abound. Continuous pornographic movies are found everywhere. The red light district, extending for many blocks, is one of the most open and flagrant on earth. Homosexuals pander their bodies on the streets. But for ten days there descended upon this stinking cesspool, like a refreshing cleansing shower from heaven, the testimony of Jesus. One hundred or more evangelists went to sing, pray and proclaim Jesus on the street corners where pimps and prostitutes plied their trade. With kindness and firmness, the evangelists answered questions and testified of the love of God. There is a house dedicated to Jesus, right in the middle of the area. It is managed by consecrated young people from several nations including our own, who are daily on the street giving away scripture portions and talking with those who frequent such places.

Just behind the huge complex where we met was one of the canals which are so prevalent in the city. Surrounding it is a huge and beautiful park, one of the many for which Amsterdam is famous. Dutch fishermen come out to cast their lures, and smoke their pipes and sit in silent contemplation. Every afternoon I would walk out to spend the better part of an hour in meditation. I reflected over what I had heard that morning. Sometimes I read some of the literature with which we had been blessed. As I thought back over my career, it seemed strange and incongruous that we had shivered the religious world over some of the things which had so divided us, as if God were sitting in heaven reacting in righteous anger over every little problem that

arose among us. I firmly resolved that upon my return home I would throw all of my energies toward uniting the body of my Lord wherever it existed.

I was particularly touched by one speech. It was made by Kahlevi Lehtinen. He earned his master's degree from the University of Helsinki, Finland, and became a Luthern minister in 1964. He now resides in Mullheim, West Germany. He has had tremendous success with young people. He has been with Campus Crusade since 1967, and became regional director of Europe in 1976. He was also general secretary for the youth ministry of People's Bible Society. His analysis of the letters to Timothy was nothing short of fascinating.

Using 2 Timothy 2:2 as a take-off point he affirmed that it was written by the greatest itinerant of all time. Without planes, trains or buses, he traversed great stretches of territory until he exhausted their possibilities. The letter was written to a young man whom he was training as an itinerant. This young man was one of many who traveled with him. Paul had a Traveling Bible School. It has been unequalled. It gave "on the job" training. The students watched as he met philosophers, cynics, atheists and agnostics and drove them under the table.

The teaching consisted of the spoken word, "the things thou hast heard of me." It resulted in commitment. "The same commit thou to faithful men." He declared that we are to be especially concerned with faithful men who have the gift of teaching. He pointed out that Paul was always on the alert for a man who could become a teacher of others. It made no difference to him what such a man was when he first found him. He converted him soundly to Jesus and turned him loose on the world. He passed along this desire and motivation to others. Timothy was always looking for faithful men. The speaker asked how many took others with them in their work. Most of the hundreds of hands that were raised were from Africa and the East. Kahlevi pointed out that Paul traveled over the same

territory from which many of them hailed. And he pointed out that this was the only secret of multiplication. It was a stirring and moving presentation.

In fact, the talk was so simple and uncomplicated that it made a stunning impression on the hearers. The points were all scriptural. They peppered down upon us like well-aimed pebbles. When I sat down out by the lake to review them they came back to me in orderly fashion. I consider that to be the essence, or criterion for a good speech. I felt indebted to this humble speaker from Finland, who with such unassuming grace taught me so much that I needed to know despite the fact I was almost twice as old as he was.

The Amsterdam Conference (4)

Ensign 1 (January 1984): 3

Ensign

This will be the final installment on the International Convention of Itinerant Evangelists. I realize that not all of our readers regard it as I do. Many will no doubt be glad that the account is nearing its end. The fact that it originated in the fertile brain of Billy Graham will prejudice some against it. Yet it took such an organization as his with world outreach to bring it off. Personally I do not know of another group on earth today who could have done it if they would or would have done it if they could. I found it to be remarkably free from the sectarian spirit. Mr. Graham, personally, was the soul of graciousness unto all. For one who has been accorded the plaudits and acclaim of the world he conducted himself with becoming modesty and humility.

One of the problems we have faced as a people, is the resentment we show when someone outside our group does something worthwhile or noteworthy. We seem all too anxious to assign ulterior motives. In the small sect in which I was reared this was always one of our most serious hang-ups. Instead of running up the flag we ran the person down. I have since found this a characteristic of most religious parties. We know and recognize only “our preachers.” Even those who labor in the same community are almost wholly strangers to us. That someone would meet and fraternize with others of every splinter, segment and faction is an unheard of thing. That one should

spend his own money to cross the ocean and do so is looked upon as the height of the ridiculous. It is branded as compromise and heresy. But I shake off into the fire all such accusations as Paul shook off the viper which fastened itself on his arm. While the brethren stand around waiting for me to fade and die I go on about my business.

It has been my lot and fortune (good or bad) to attend most of the lectureships and conventions sponsored by our brethren of all shapes, grades and stripes. There is no difference. The noninstrumental brethren hold lectureships. The instrumental brethren hold conventions. Both do the same things. If a visitor from outer space dropped in and attended one he would not know whether he was at a lectureship or a convention. Both of them are circumscribed and pretty well stacked with “faithful” brethren, unless the sponsors feel that someone is weakening and they might line him up if they give him a chance to speak to them. Generally, though, those who speak will be “our brethren.” They will be tried and true on all doctrinal issues except for those which it is agreed makes no difference. On these they can be as far out as possible and it will not count.

But going to the convention was the first time in my life I attended a meeting of such magnitude where Jesus Christ was the only issue. The first two days I missed something. Then it dawned upon me what it was. The workshops were all dedicated to two things. One was how to get the message of Jesus out to a world which was hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The other was how to combat the malign forces which challenged His claim to be King of kings and Lord of lords. There were no workshops on the millennium, instrumental music, Sunday schools, one cup, or other secondary issues. Presumably those who were present had personal opinions on all of these and kindred matters. But if they did they kept them to themselves, where private matters should be kept.

I fully expected to hear a great deal about the movement of the Holy Spirit in these latter days. I heard nothing! It is true that the Spirit was given credit for transmitting to us the revelation of heaven and for empowering and directing those who took that revelation to mankind, but such things as “the charismatic movement” were left alone. I saw a dozen or more men among the thousands lift their hands in praise to God during the singing of the hymns and prayer, but, because of 1 Timothy 2:8 it did not bug me. One was a giant of a man from Sri Lanka, where the majority were small of stature. I was thankful he was on our side.

As I go back over those days from afar, I see them in a clearer light. It is my firm belief that nothing that is created stands aloof. There is a bond, often intangible, which ties everything together. Just as there is one God and Father of us all, so he has, in the final analysis, produced but one creation. It is a universe and not a multi-verse. Every atom is linked together. I am related to every human being on the earth. Humanness is not a quality in which I can rejoice in solitude. I am a part of every refugee, for, in a sense we are all refugees from something.

By the same token, there is no historical fact which does not intimately affect me as an individual. Just as I am linked to the first sin committed by Adam and Eve in the garden and must die because of the curse placed upon mankind, so I am linked to everything else which has happened to mankind since that fateful day. I stood recently on the spot in the plaza of Florence where Savonarola was hanged and his body consumed by the flames. I felt akin to this courageous Dominican who defied the pope and continued to lift up his voice in condemnation of the Medici family for its greed and oppression. A few days before I had stood before the famous reformation statue in Geneva. I felt the same kinship with Calvin, Huss, Knox and Farel.

I am a part of every struggle for freedom, every rebellion

against intolerance, every attempt to loose the fetters of captives which has ever been. The God whom I serve is a history-making God. He is not limited to great men. He is still making it. He is still moving men into position on the checker-board of time. Now, I am one of those men. My response will help to determine the action and fate of many of my offspring yet unborn. I am convinced that we are, wittingly or unwittingly, part of a great and amazing reformation. We can quibble about words by which to designate it. We can argue about the terms with which to describe it.

But while we assail each other in our ingrained littleness, God is working the divine purpose. I could jot down a source of things, some positive, others negative, out of which he is weaving the cloth of renewal. But permit me to say, that of all the things which have happened in the past few years, few equal and none surpass, the gathering of itinerant evangelists in one place. Since the convention ended several things have happened that are calculated to enhance the winds of change. Already they are beginning to blow in many places. Men are lifting up their heads. They are beginning to respond. At least three things have happened recently which are of utmost significance.

Renewal is not the work of men. It is the work of God. It is not our moving but the Spirit moving in and through us that brings the divine will in human affairs. We must be open to the Spirit. We must be unafraid and unashamed to do His bidding. We cannot kindle the flame, we can only fan it. God is the substance of all revolutions, the guiding star of all renewal. Let us not fear change for all of us were born of change. The word of God is unchanging but men are not. It is by change that we approach nearer to God's ideal.

We are not stagnant pools, scum-laden and brackish, "He that believeth on me, out of his inward parts shall flow rivers of living water." There is a river of life flowing out of you. It sweeps away impurities. It cleanses us. It is clear and cool. It refreshes

those whom it contacts. He has given us His peace. That peace is nothing like the world gives. If we believe this, and surely we do, then all we have to do is to combine our faith and share our resources and the whole world will be flooded by His power and love.

If I allow the river which flows out of me to join the river which flows out of you, and we bring into our close fellowship all others, the water will overflow its banks and irrigate the seed we have planted. I can see that beginning to happen. We are not the springs, we are merely the channels. And rivers of living water do not flow from sects. Sects dam up the streams. They want to control the flow. A sect is frightened by anything it cannot control. It passes laws and enacts rules which keep individuals from moving. It is a master of flood control measures.

But it is individuals who are the conduits of the Spirit. They are the aqueducts through which the water flows. And, periodically, individuals lose their fear of chains and swords and the stake, and when they do things begin to happen. They are all linked to the struggles of the past and the history that has transpired. And they affect the future. How they affect it! I can see this beginning to transpire. And I rejoice and am glad in it, as I am in any of the Lord's doings. It is marvelous in our eyes!

About Opinions

Ensign 2 (February 1984): 23

Ensign

More than three hundred years before Jesus of Nazareth graced this footstool of God, called earth, Aristotle wrote the book called Nichomachean Ethics. Although he was the tutor of Alexander the Great, he dedicated the book to his own son, whom he named Nichomachus. I want to lift a quote from it. “Some men are just as sure of the truth of their opinions as are others of what they know.” That statement is as correct in our A.D. world as it was in the B.C. world of the ancient Athenians. Most of the problems of the people of God are caused by those who cling to, defend and press their opinions with the same degree of tenacity as a Missouri mule. The term “stubbornness” may be substituted for tenacity if preferred.

Opinion is defined as “a judgment or belief formed without certain evidence, belief stronger than impression, less strong than positive knowledge.” There are some fly-by-night reasoners who get red in the face, and whose blood pressure rises at the very thought that they held an opinion. They see no ground for forming one. God’s word means what it says and says what it means. Of course, that is not the question. The problem is whether they understand what it says, or inject a little bit of their prejudice into its interpretation. How does it come that every honest person does not agree upon the very first reading. The question is not with the infallible word of God but with fallible judgment.

Occasionally, someone from far “back in the woods” will issue the profound statement that the Bible does not need to be interpreted, all it needs is to be obeyed. But it is apparent that he is chopping with a dull hatchet. What he wants is for everyone to do everything exactly as he sees it. But that would set the cause of Christ back to the Dark Ages. God gave no plan demanding that when we enter “a place of worship” that we should unscrew our heads and deposit them under the back seat. It is the give-and-take of dialogue which has brought us as far as we have come. And we have a lot farther to go.

Every document regardless of origin and content must be interpreted. And those who read it will make certain deductions related to it. Those deductions may be justified or they may not be. It depends upon how much of myself and others I inject into them. They are not like positive truth. I must cling to it if I am burned at the stake. My opinions are not that sacred. They are subject to change with increasing knowledge. Faith is public. Opinions are private. They should be held as such. I can never entertain the thought of binding them upon anyone else.

It is no sin to reach an opinion which differs from mine. It is not a sin to express it. It may become boresome if one keeps repeating it like a harpist playing a harp with a single string. It is also an indication of limited knowledge. If one knew anything more he would almost certainly get on it sometime, even if by accident. But the wrong comes when you arbitrarily bind it upon me, contrary to my conviction, which is as sacred to me as yours is to you.

Let's take an example. As one reads the word of God, he concludes that it teaches that Jesus will return before the millennium, set up a kingdom with an earthly city as its base, and from it rule all nations with a rod of iron. Another reading the same passages, but conditioned by a different set of beliefs from childhood reaches the exact opposite position. A third, knowing that this exists in the realm of prophecy, tends to

spiritualize rather than literalize. He thinks the millennium is in existence now. He may choose various times in history when he postulates that Satan was bound and was restricted from deceiving the nations as well.

Which is correct? What must I believe? The beauty of it is that my hope of heaven does not depend upon either. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. Millions of people believed in Jesus and thousands died for him before John wrote one word about "the thousand years." Those who were decapitated and burned at the stake for his name's sake, and never saw a copy of the Revelation letter will reign with him in white, the same as those who have formed all sorts of mental images, and can give a blow-by-blow description of Armageddon and the last great day. One can believe in Jesus and not even be able to spell millennium.

Opinions are our brainchildren. We love them like we do our physical children. Our neighbors may not share our love for either. They may regard the first as crackpot ideas and the second as spoiled brats. Nothing can make you more unpopular than to be continually pushing your opinions or the snapshots of your children. We love them because we conceived them, but others feel they have better things to do with their time than to look at or listen to our conceptions. Both should be kept home, preferably hidden in the closet, for the good of the church and the peace of the neighborhood.

I recall an old brother who had dredged up a fantastic notion from the scripture and felt called of God to unload it upon everyone he met. Regardless of the theme being discussed by a group of men he would inject himself into it by saying "That reminds me." With that elaborate introduction he was off and running. He was as popular as a hornet in a Ladies' Aid Meeting. And he could disperse a crowd as suddenly as an unexpected hailstorm. Finally he died. Everyone missed him but there seemed to be a sigh of relief. On the way home from the

cemetery one brother suggested an epitaph for his marker. It would read simply, "Look out, angels!" It was just another case of where one was more taken with his speculations than his neighbors were.

Voltaire said in a letter written January 5, 1759, "Opinion has caused more trouble on this little earth than plagues or earthquakes." He should have known. He was as full of them as a sled dog is of fleas. John Locke, in his Essay on Human Understanding, 1690, wrote: "New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common." While we do not covet opposition to what we should suggest, we should expect it. One who puts forth an opinion should be sure he has plenty of time. After three or four years it may begin to bear fruit. If pushed it will generate opposition and ill feeling.

Alexander Campbell wrote in 1835:

Men cannot give up their opinions, and, therefore can never unite, says one. We do not ask them to give them up, we ask them only not to impose them upon others. Let them hold their opinions, but let them hold them as private property. The faith is public property; opinions are, and always have been, private property. Men have foolishly attempted to make the deductions of some great men the common measure of all Christians. Hence, the deductions of a Luther, and a Calvin, and a Wesley, have been the rule and measure of all who coalesce under the names of these leaders.

Mr. Campbell continues:

It is cruel to excommunicate a man because of the imbecility of his intellect. We have been censured loud and long for laying too much stress upon the assent of the understanding; but those who have most acrimoniously censured us, have laid much more stress upon the assent of the mind than we have ever done. We never did at any

time, exclude a man from the kingdom of God for a mere imbecility of the intellect, or, in other words, because he could not assent to our opinions. All sects are doing, or have done this.

If we could but do as Mr. Campbell has said, and get others to do it, we not only would stifle all sectism of the future, but we would cure much of it in the present. It is the exaltation of matters of opinion, coupled with the perversity of disposition, which has resulted in most, if not all, of our present division. The answer lies in putting opinion in its proper place.

Fellowship and Calling

Ensign 3 (March 1984): 43

Ensign

My thesis is very simple. It is that we have been laboring under a false impression for years. It was inherited. It was not original. It resulted from the wrong choice of our spiritual fathers. They were honest but they were mistaken. We are perpetuating their error. We do them no honor. It is no excuse that others are fostering the same mistake. We cannot be saved by the mistakes of others. We should repent of our false concept. We should bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

Our mistakes are intertwined like briars. The first one is that we are saved by what we know rather than by whom we know. This places a premium upon human understanding. It also handicaps the one who was born with a defective rational ability. It forces some to be “heretics” without their consent. The second is like unto it. It hinges fellowship upon knowing and subscribing to the right things. The “right things” are those which the equivocating sect can thrust into a prominence they do not deserve. These differ with each sect. The fact that they do shows that they grow out of a sectarian consciousness rather than from the will of God. There is no way of knowing that God cares about them in one way or another.

In 1 Corinthians 1:9 we are told that “God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ.” We do not enter the fellowship by becoming mentally sharp

enough to grasp great distinctions. We are called into it by God. And, judging from the congregation to which this was written, there were some called who would not be given “the time of day” by some of our more pompous elders now. This was addressed to a congregation which had more schisms existing in it than any you have ever seen. It is noteworthy that they were not to agree to be in the fellowship, but because they were in the fellowship they were to agree.

Fellowship begins with what God has done for us. He did the calling. We only heard the call and responded. When we answered we entered into a relationship with the Son. We were also automatically and spontaneously introduced into a relationship with every other person on the surface of the earth who had responded to the same call. But the vertical relationship created the horizontal and not the reverse. We are not in the relationship to the Son because we are in the relationship with our brethren. We are in the relationship with our brethren because we are in the relationship with His Son. Brethren may separate from me but they are powerless to separate me from God. That is why the verse begins with “God is faithful.”

The brethren did not call me. And they are powerless to dismiss me. Only God can do that. My relationship stands in the faithfulness of God, and not in the faithfulness of men. If every other person in the world becomes unfaithful, God will still be faithful. It is comforting to realize that every person on earth who sustains this relationship with the Father and the Son is God’s child and my brother. He is not God’s child because he is my brother. He is my brother because he is God’s child. I do not have to sort out the brethren like potatoes. I do not have to place them in the right bins. All I am called upon to do is to receive and accept them.

Some of them may seem a little peculiar. I suspect I seem the same way to some of them. It was that way in our earthly family. I was one of six children. No two of us were alike. Even

the neighbors could tell us apart. How we ever lived together almost makes one believe the age of miracles is not over. We disagreed, we demonstrated anger, we threw things at each other when the folks were not looking. We were not brothers and sisters because of our pleasant ways but because we had the same father and mother.

That's the way it is with the family of God. We do not all have 20/20 vision. Some of us are a little squinch-eyed. We do not all grow to the same height. Some of us are potential dwarfs. Some of us are a little stooped. We can see the ground easier than we can see heaven. But we are brothers, warts and all, because we have the same spiritual Father and Mother. God is the Father of us all. He is over all, through all and in all. The new covenant, the Jerusalem from above, is the mother of all of us. And we do not all mill around, kicking up dust, in the same old corral.

It seems obvious that anyone in whom the Holy Spirit dwells is part of the unity of the Spirit, and I am obligated to keep that unity in the bond of peace. It may be a little trying at times. I may become a little exasperated but I am to endeavor to do it. Because of the unfortunate zeal without knowledge which divided us into sects before I was born it may be difficult, but there is no excuse for me parading my knowledge without zeal to fulfill the divine directive. I would rather die serving His purpose than to live selfishly serving my own.

We cannot choose those in whom the Spirit takes up His abode any more than we could choose our brothers and sisters in the flesh. We were stuck with those we received. We are powerless to select those with whom we must keep the bond of peace. It will do no good for us to indulge in the wild fantasy that they are all in our party. They never were. They are not now. That kind of narrow, constrictive thinking will only choke the life from us like a boa constrictor. It will not give life to them. We are not going to be saved as congregations but as

individuals. In the final analysis all fellowship is between individuals for only individuals can inherit eternal life. And if you love me as I love you, no knife can cut our love in two, not even a kitchen cleaver wielded by a preacher or a group of local elders.

One of these days all sects will be banished, and the one body will be revealed in all of its beauty and splendor. I want to start getting ready for that day. I do not want it to sneak up on me. When it comes, many of us will be surprised as to who is in the family. Many will also be surprised as to who is not. Meanwhile, it will be to our interest not to be too judgmental. The Lord knoweth them that are His. And He can still say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." He will not ask us about it, if we make it.

I guess about the worst thing which a lot of preachers do is to play God with other men's lives. They become all frustrated if everyone does not dance to the particular tune they are playing. Sometimes they get mad and resign. This saves the congregation having to put up with their quirks. There is nothing worse that can happen to a congregation than to have a weekly wrestling match featuring the preacher and elders. A congregation which can survive such a free-for-all can go through a tornado and not even know the wind came up.

Only one who is perfect in his thinking has the right to make another's imperfection in thinking a test of fellowship. That does it! It makes perfection something for which all of us are striving and not the attainment of any of us. And when the angel of death beats his wing outside of our windows we will still be striving for it. Let's make fellowship on earth a free acceptance of the gift of God and not something we achieve by our own thinking. This will lessen tension, define differences, and place problems in their proper pigeon-holes. They are for the birds.

It is silly to ignore all that we hold in common in Christ to separate from one another over the few things upon which we disagree! Whatever happened to that wonderful concept discovered by our pioneers, that the way to unity is the way of consensus? Now it seems it is by way of nonsense.

Cultivating Tolerance

Ensign 4 (April 1984): 63

Ensign

Once I was a debater. I was one because I was also a sectarian. Finally, I became convinced that debating with brethren was wrong. It was a sin and a very ineffective sin at that. Of course we always projected the good side of it. We said we were investigating all angles to arrive at the truth. That is so much poppycock. The spirit of rivalry took over. We were striving to vanquish an opponent, to make him look small, to reduce him to mincemeat. We operated the factional meat grinder for no other purpose. We were representatives of parties. Since the very party spirit is a work of the flesh we were guilty before God.

It now seems incredible that we ever thought truth would triumph in such an atmosphere. When two tribes choose a gladiator to represent them and toss them both into the ring with drawn swords to hack away at each other, how can truth triumph? The guffaws of the audience, the knee-slapping, and the vociferous expressions only serve as encouragement to the baser passions. I came to love my brethren, all of them, and as I did, I became aware of what made most of them as they were. I lost my desire for victory and triumph. I have asked God to forgive me.

One thing which motivated me to sheath the sword was a growing recognition that the things about which we were

wrangling were not that important after all. While we were debating about secondary and inferior matters, the world was being lost all about us. In some cases our debating actually gave them a shove in the direction of hell. It came to me that if you were right about Jesus you could be wrong about a lot of other things and still be saved; but if you were wrong about Jesus you could be right about everything else and still be lost. I could understand why Paul resolved not to know anything except Christ and Him crucified.

We had it out about such things as cups, classes and colleges. The demons laughed in unrestrained glee, while the angels in heaven wept. If the congregation was not divided before the debate, we left it divided afterwards. We argued about music, missions and methods, but there was no way we could determine how God felt about them. He did not think enough about them to tell us. Our contrived arguments and spurious reasoning about “the argument from silence” only showed our ignorance. Nothing could offset the fact that we were disturbing the peace over matters of opinion. It is legitimate to form opinions, it is wrong to bind them upon others.

Anyone who thinks more of his opinions than he does of his brethren will defend his opinions and destroy his brethren. It is just that simple. Arguing with brethren is no way to arbitrate differences of opinion. We began arguing with the sects when our “restoration movement” was still in swaddling-clothes. We have not eliminated a one of them. There are a lot more of them than when we started. We have added quite a few of our own to the number. It would seem that if a doctor had only one prescription and it killed every patient to whom he gave it, he would change remedies.

But everyone knows we have continued to divide and subdivide. We have more subdivisions than the real estate section in the Sunday newspaper. A lot of them originated over trivia. The restoration movement was a flat failure in its announced

objective. It did not only not reach its goal, it fell on its face and has continued to lie kicking in the mud. We have changed our aims several times, but nothing can hide our defeat. But our system is not working. Our faith is not deep enough, high enough, or broad enough. You can measure the shallowness of a man's faith by the littleness of the issues which cause him to separate from the saints. By this criterion some are operating in mighty shallow water.

We are called upon to receive one another as God received us. He received us in our ignorance and with our raw temperaments exposed. He opened his arms when we were explosive, combative, and ready to "fly off the handle" at the least provocation. He did not tell us to clean up our act and come on in. He told us to come on in and clean up our act. We knew very little and part of that little was wrong. We have no more right to make a man's ignorance a test of our relationship to him, than God made our ignorance a test of his reception of us. If he had been as censorious of us as we have been of others we would long since have gone down for the last time "unwept, unhonored and unsung." We need to cultivate the art of tolerance for others. Tolerance is not the endorsing of anything that is wrong, it is simply the enduring of one who thinks it is right.

None of us will ever be saved because he was right about everything. Perfection in understanding is what we demand of others. We dare not postulate it of ourselves. That is why we choose certain items and emphasize them to the neglect of others. I know a man right now who would not worship where an instrument is used but is playing around with a brother's wife. If you are all right on the instrument, adultery does not count. One who indulges in such casuistry should be ashamed to live and afraid to die. Yet, it is indulged by every person who makes the salvation of mankind depend upon the degree of knowledge one possesses.

With God it is not a question of being right about everything, but of being in the right one with everything. We are saved by a person, and that person is not ourself. Eternal life is not a reward for making A's on all of the moral, ethical and spiritual subjects which we take in the school of life. It is rather given us because we love the Teacher. There is room for people to make mistakes if they are free people. He who is not free to be wrong is not free at all. He is a slave to circumstances.

I suspect the wayward son in the story Jesus told of the prodigal was reluctant to climb out of the pigsty and leave the muck behind and start toward home. It was a clear admission that his dreams had gone glimmering. His boasting had turned out to be empty bluster. He was a failure. He did not want to face his father. He no doubt recoiled at what his older brother would say. But he was hungry, dirty and disheveled. He looked longingly at the carob pots the hogs were shoveling in one more time. Then, in sheer longing, he got up and turned his footsteps toward the place he had left so disgustingly.

Now, comes the pay-off in the story. The father was watching for his return. While he was a long way off shuffling along the father saw him. He began to run toward the errant lad. Get that! It was the father who ran to meet him. He fell on his neck crying "My son, my son." He welcomed him as one who had returned from the dead. He said that he had been lost but now was found. God seems more concerned that we come to him than with what we are carrying when we make the trip. I often wonder how that parable would have turned out if some of us had been substituted for the father. Would we have told the son, "Go, get a shave and haircut, then come back."

Really, the story is tremendously interesting but since it deals with the critical Pharisees, it was actually directed toward the other son. He was farther from the father while working in the backyard than the younger son was while in the hogpen. He had never left home because really he had never been home. If

“home is where the heart is,” he did not even know its meaning. Too often we have acted like he did, coming around the corner of the house, screaming and protesting at the reception of a younger brother.

It is not too much to say that most of us have at some time in our life reacted as the older brother. We have been Pharisees. Which makes me say, that we set out to restore the early Christians and failed. But it was not a total failure for we did restore the Pharisees.

The Root of the Problem

Ensign 2 (February 1985): 26

Ensign

Child abuse is on the increase in our western world. This is a crime only of rational beings. The “lower animals” as we refer to them, risk their own lives to protect their offspring. The mother tiger transfers her cubs to a safe place by carrying them in her mouth. A meadow lark flutters apparently hopelessly crippled before an intruder to entice him away from the nest. Only man, possessed of the ability to reason, beats, cudgels, burns and tortures his helpless babies, who instinctively look to him for protection.

And psychologists tell us that this frightful condition will increase. The reason is found in the fact that one who was abused by his parents is much more likely to abuse his own children. The old adage “Like father, like son,” becomes a practical dictum of life. The image one forms of his own father becomes the guide for parental behavior in his own life. The problem is augmented by the casual sexual liaisons which prevail. The children resulting from these are often regarded as mistakes. With no real love existing between the one who begets and the one who conceives the infant, there is no love to be extended to the fruit of the womb. Everyone hates his “mistakes.”

If we may leave the physical for a moment, I would like to direct you to the spiritual plane. How one conceives of the

Fatherhood of God will determine how he reacts to the brotherhood of man. Brotherhood stems from a common fatherhood. It has little to do with the concepts, notions or opinions of those who compose it. They may have been one in the family a long time before they began to develop deductions, and if so, their opinions will not destroy the relationship created by the Father. We need to realize that we are born by His action and not by ours. The admonition to “Accept one another, then, for the glory of God, as Christ has accepted you,” is the closing admonition to a dissertation on how to work together in spite of disagreements about eating meat, drinking wine, or anything else “which you regard as good.”

We must face facts, disagreeable as they appear. It is one of the most difficult things we can do. Most of us would rather face a grizzly bear or a buzz-saw than to look a fact in the face. Facts are stubborn things! And the fact is that we are split into segments and separated into sects. We are as fragmented as if a tornadic wind had come down and shattered and scattered us every way. We indulge in all sorts of vain fantasies to keep from admitting the truth. Some of us take the ludicrous position that our party is the church in toto. All others are scapegraces and scare-crows. Their only hope is to abandon their party and join ours. If they become like us they will be “among the faithful when the saints go marching in.”

I know how enticing it is to be brainwashed into thinking that you are the people of God to the exclusion of every other person in the whole wide world. I once felt that I was part of the “in group.” I even preached it. I have learned better, and as a result it is a lot more difficult. I have to face temptation and make my own decisions. There are no longer any neatly tabulated or computer-printed lists of rights and wrongs handed down by the partisan “powers that be.” But that does not answer why we act as we do.

It certainly is not that we are bad and unworthy as a

people, except in the application of our religion. Most of us would not steal. You could leave your purse unattended and we would return it. Morally, a lot of us are without reproach, and if we are otherwise we have learned how to conceal it. But when it comes to abusing brethren “we let it all hang out.” We don’t care who knows it. That’s the way we show our fidelity to the Father. It is the way we demonstrate the grace of God in our lives. It is our watermark of faithfulness. It is the way we stand up to be counted. We are loyal. No one else is. If it were not for us all would be lost. And that’s that!

Actually we are afraid, mortally afraid. We will not admit it. But if a stranger comes within our gates our hearts turn a flip-flop. We get sweaty palms, and a feeling of weakness. We do not know what to do with him, or how to deal with him. We have to question him, to sort him out. We have to see if he will fit in our container. Never mind what he thinks about Jesus. How does he stand on a thousand other things. Fear is the basis of all sectarianism. It is the incubator which hatches out every party in the world. We have a concept we have formed of God. We envision Him as a glorified Santa Claus. “He is making a list, He’s checking it twice, He’s gonna find out who’s naughty or nice.” We dare not be naughty. We are under law and not under grace.

We forget the law was a temporary bridge, erected to serve until the highway was completed. It was a custodian to bring us unto Christ. Now that faith has come we are no longer under a custodian. But because we have come to see God as a conforming legalist, we have come to adopt the same stance. We think we prove our allegiance to Him by hating His other children. Faith counts for but little. It is knowledge which really counts. We are justified by knowledge of certain things. And it has to be the right things because every party has relegated certain things to the realm of indifference.

Each party has different things in various categories. It

would take a “Philadelphia lawyer” to keep up with all of the quirks. When we abandon faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and start substituting our concept of various positions as the supreme test of loyalty we soon find ourselves floundering in a sea of froth and foam. It is not a relationship to what is right but a right relationship to Him that brings peace. He is our wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption. If any man glory, let him glory in the Lord!

Renewal Through Recovery

Ensign 3 (March 1985): 46

Ensign

The restoration movement, as we speak of it was a product of historical forces. All of these converged at a time and place suitable for their exploitation. They shaped and sharpened the minds of the pioneers. Other movements also came into existence by other believers. Each of them is regarded as “the restoration movement” by their adherents. They know little about ours, and we know little about theirs. As the angels watch from the ramparts of glory they are treated to a welter of such movements. There must be a lot of angelic wonderment when it is realized that each such movement thinks of itself as the one body of which Jesus is identified as the head.

Our movement was started by men. So were all the rest. These men were subject to the frailties and failings of humanity. They were tempted by the flesh. Some of them were haughty, arrogant and proud, just as their heirs are. Some were cowardly, frightened and scared. Some were illiterate, uneducated and unsophisticated. They had to fight themselves as well as Satan. We know when the movement started. We know where it started. And we know who started it. We also know who swung the broad-axe and shivered it to smithereens. The resulting bloody mess makes “the chain-saw murders” of movie fame look like a Labor Day celebration.

As I grow older I spend a lot of time thinking about

movements within the body. I also meditate a great deal about the body itself. They are not the same. To confuse and confound them is one of the worst things that can happen to the thought processes. I should know for I was guilty of the blatant error for years. It colored my thinking back when I knew I was right and could not be wrong about anything. I now know that just as the circulation of the blood is movement within the body and not the body itself, so historical movements are not the body of our Lord.

When we transformed the movement into a church it ceased to become a movement and became an idol. The church did not need to be resurrected. It had never died. A body cannot die while its head is still alive. And the head of the body had already triumphed over death. But just as people will fight more bitterly for their idols, whether real or imaginary, so, like spiritual cavemen, we took up our clubs and began to beat the brains out of some, with whom we had eaten and drunk but a short time before. And we did it in the name of the Lord. We called our battles to the death “debates” and sure enough, some of our ecclesiastics found justification for our actions. Twisting the scriptures is not the exclusive prerogative of our religious neighbors.

Now many of us are getting older. We are approaching twilight. The dusk is beginning to fall. We can hear the whip-poor-wills calling. The stars are beginning to appear. We look back and realize the futility of movements which have become monuments. A movement is to celebrate feats which have already been accomplished. It commemorates men and deeds that have departed. Monuments are not going anywhere. We have to move them. They can no longer move us.

So long as the body lives it can be animated by movements within it. Sometimes those movements are universal. They topple kingdoms. They cause powers to tremble. The reformation was like that. It was the embodiment of a courageous and stubborn

individual. By our own standards he was crude. His language was often earthly. But you cannot measure a man of the sixteenth century with a yardstick of the twentieth. Sometimes what we think of as refinement is gloss or tinsel. In our own day the movement Luther began was shattered. It is losing much of its momentum. It is running down. It is sectarian, if you will permit a pot to call a kettle black.

It is time for another movement to vitalize and energize. The reformation has had its day, and what a day it was. Now the restoration movement of which we are the heirs is divided and strife-torn. Those who speak of unity in our day are talking only about getting their segment to work together without open hostility. They are not thinking of those beyond their walls. The world is seeking for renewal. So be it! Call it what you wish. Designate it as you like. But let's get going. Let's be a part of it! Let's quit treading on water. I have a suggestion. Let's inaugurate a movement called "renewal through recovery."

Renewal can only come that way— through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. The apostles occupy a unique place in the kingdom. They sit on twelve thrones judging. The message they proclaimed changed a pagan society. Their purpose brought purpose to a purposeless culture. They brought power to humanity lying prostrate in powerless frustration. And that same proclamation, purpose and power will transform our decadent age. It is the only thing that can do it. Nothing else can— *nothing!*

The proclamation was Christ. They preached Jesus. Everything else is secondary, subordinate, auxiliary. If you are right about Jesus you can be wrong about everything else and still be saved. If you are wrong about Jesus you can be right about everything else and still be lost. One who is drowning does not need a textbook, but a lifeline. The faith that saves is not Jesus pointing us to a book, but a book pointing us to Jesus. It is not merely believing what is written for the book's sake, but

believing in Jesus for Christ's sake that makes the difference. "These are, written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ" and life comes through His name. You may get a button or Sunday-school pin for memorizing the Bible but life is in Him. The Bible is important because it tells about Jesus, but one is greater than anything that is said about him.

All truth is equally true but not all truth is equally important. It is the truth that Methuselah lived longer than any other man, but that is not nearly so important as the fact that Jesus died for my sins. Let us lead men to Jesus and allow Him to lead them beside the still waters and make them lie down in green pastures. We are egotistical enough to feel they are not safe with the good shepherd. They also need us to keep an eye on them. We seek to lord it over them when there is but one Lord over all. Sheep need to beware of wolves but they also need to beware of thieves and hirelings as well.

Forbearing One Another

Ensign 4 (April 1985): 66

Ensign

A few days ago I was reading a Catholic publication. When I was much younger I read only what was written by “faithful brethren.” They were not writing much and a lot of what they did write was not that important. Now I read what I want to and do my own thinking. Some of it is not so important either. I use, the word “Catholic” advisedly. I am sure the paper is not universally read. I entertain the view it is not even that popular among all our Catholic neighbors. One of them told me that the man who distributed them at the church in our neighborhood became incensed at something he had read and refused to have anything further to do with it. That sounds to me like a lot of my brethren who act the same way. The party spirit does not change with the party name.

In any event I came across something which struck me as interesting. It had to do with the wine used in the Mass, a word loosely employed by Rome to describe the Lord’s Supper. I quote: “The wine used to celebrate the Eucharist must be made from the fruit of the vine (cf. Lk. 22:18), natural and pure, unmixed with anything else.” The article went on to say that in 1974 an indult was given to priests with the problem of alcoholism, that Mass might be said by using unfermented grape juice. In case the word “indult” is not a working part of your daily vocabulary, it refers to a privilege granted by the pope as an exemption from some ecclesiastical duty.

But some theologians questioned whether it could be consecrated unfermented. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has ruled that the indult will no longer be given. A number of people in the United States protested. They requested that the decision be reversed. Alcoholism and celibacy are the two great problems of the priesthood, made up as it is of sensitive men who must repress their natural feelings and inclinations and live in virtual solitude. The article concluded, "The problem is complex theologically and so far the Vatican is remaining firm in its decision."

Years ago I was in Windsor, Canada. I went one day at noon to visit and have lunch with two former alcoholics who had recently been sobered up by faith in Jesus. Both of them told me that if fermented wine was used in the Lord's Supper they would "fall off the wagon," go on a stem-winder and be down in the gutter again. They were glad of the "indult" of the local community of the saints although they would not have recognized the word if it had sat down beside them. They made coffee so strong that one cup almost gave me delirium tremens, but each of them threw three cups "down the hatch" without even gulping.

Shortly afterwards I was in Texas. A man came for over a hundred miles to enlist me in the cause of fermented wine. It was then I learned the problem was not only "complex theologically" for the Catholics but for us as well. The Texas brother called those who did not see the thing as he did "Welch Christians" and "grape juice addicts." He was quite convinced that if they did not repent of the mockery they were making of the feast of love, God would banish them to the lake of fire where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He reached down inside a wrinkley shopping bag and handed me a bunch of pamphlets and told me that the Lord had raised me up to fight this grievous sin.

I already knew there were "cups brethren" and "one cup

brethren” but as time faded into eternity, as the older brethren used to say, I learned of various other hyphenated disciples. Some insisted on unleavened bread, others used leavened bread. There were those who broke the loaf in two before passing it. Others thought it was a mortal sin to do so. Their opposers called them “loaf pinchers” because they insisted on passing the loaf whole and allowing each one to break off a little or big piece as the Spirit moved him. At one place a gentle man “who was rowing with one oar” took the whole loaf and began to eat from it. It created quite a furor when the one passing the loaf tried to rescue it before it was too late. Others had the Supper anytime during the meeting but there were those who insisted on “tarrying one for another.”

The public exhibition of fellowship was turned into a welter of disfellowship. Jesus was alienated to the background and hardly mentioned in the gathering. The membership was too busy “searching the scriptures” for validation of what they did. The pattern was so plain anyone with an ounce of brains could see it. It was spelled out in black and white. Preachers exhorted with hand waving and reddened faces, “Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” But there was no pope or Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. So every elder and every editor became a papal legate. In some cities there sprung up little congregations dedicated to the defense of the faith. The motto was unfurled “They shall not pass.” They had no time to waste on such nonsense as loving those who saw things differently than they did.

What was the problem with the saints? The answer is quite simple. They were seeking and searching for something which never existed. There was no pattern such as they were looking for. There was no code of laws, no compendium of statutes, no legislative files. The faith was not a relationship to a written code but to a living person. The word was a series of guidelines, of white marks along the highway of life. Man loves laws. He may not keep them but he feels safer knowing they are there. He

craves for someone else to “call the shots,” to tell him what he must not do as well as what he must do. In the absence of a lord looking over his left shoulder he begins to make his own laws and to demand that every other person on earth observe them.

Every man has an influence. He can line up followers. It does not make any difference how ridiculous or absurd his thinking. Look at the followers of Mr. Moon. They are not all a part of the raggle-taggle of the world. Many of them are college young people. Look at the followers of Joseph Smith. No one ever palmed off on unsuspecting people a greater hoax. But they are building immense temples all over the world. The fact that a divisive party is growing and becoming “mainline” says nothing about how God regards it.

What we need is to be steeped and bathed in the words of Jesus “that they all may be one.” Remember that this applied to all who believed on Him through the apostolic testimony. It was belief in Him, not in a thousand things, that would operate to produce a sense of oneness in the world. There is something about faith in Jesus which attracts like a magnet. It draws and pulls and tugs at the soul like nothing else can. There are many problems which are complex theologically. So far as I am concerned the pope cannot settle them. The idea of the papacy only complicates the issues. It is itself one of the problems and no solution. But this one thing I do, forgetting the complications which men add, I follow Him. He is the bright and morning star. He is my hope. He is my salvation. Thank the Father for sending Jesus.

Fear and Pride

Ensign 6 (June 1985): 103

Ensign

The world is full of a jumble of sects. Most every one is counting noses and shouting hallelujahs when it surpasses another in number. The spirit of rivalry is often as pronounced as it is on the football gridiron. The young people are turned into cheerleaders who exercise the same role as do those for the Dallas Cowboys. A few of the proclaimers of the “good news” are never happier than when thrusting a verbal dagger into the quivering chest of the leader of another party. And all of this is hailed as fulfilling the will of him who prayed that “they all may be one.” Each party in the world glibly quotes that and each secretly suspects that it is the one.

What is the origin of all this confusion? How did it begin? What perpetuates it? Anyone who can read knows that it is condemned by the Holy Spirit. The record is plain. “That there be no divisions among you.” The fragmentation is attributed to a variety of causes. Not a one of them makes sense. But the leaven has turned out to be dynamite. It has blown into smithereens what should be one body. I suggest that there are two underlying reasons for our sad state of affairs — fear and pride!

Every sect from the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus’ day on earth, to the largest and most flourishing religious denomination of our time started and is sustained by these unworthy principles. Someone searching the scriptures discovers

what to him seems like a new and unique truth. He is able eventually to create in the minds of a few of his disciples a fondness for and an allegiance to it. They begin to propagate the doctrine. As others oppose it, it grows dearer to them. Eventually they begin to feel it is the most important thing and that Jesus gave His life for it. Those who do not attach that much importance to it, or who disregard it, are debarred from the association with them.

To guarantee its perpetuity a wall is erected. All walls have two purposes. They keep someone out, and someone else in. They are monuments to alarm and anxiety. The Berlin Wall was erected to separate people who belong together. It is generally overlooked that it is the people behind the walls who are in prison. Those outside are free. When walls of dogma are constructed the learning process is sealed off. If one learns something different he must stifle or sublimate it. He dare not express it for fear of being ostracized. One who becomes a sectarian embalms himself in the past and present. He is mummified as certainly as the ancient Egyptians in their musty tombs. He stagnates in the pool of his own yesterdays!

It is fear which builds walls. Fear mixes the mortar and wields the trowel. We forget that the truth was given to protect us. We are conned into thinking we are here to protect it. Like money, truth thrives best when committed to the cultural exchange of the marketplace. It is only reduced in influence when hoarded in the caves, which we unfortunately call "churches," as if there were more than one. Every sect lives in constant fear of the erosion of some "truth" it has discovered. Sometimes what is called "truth" is purely reactionary, as presbyterianism was to episcopacy. Sometimes it is reversionary, as seventh-day adventism to Judaism. Sometimes it is a fixation with a cultural stage of development which we have been unable to discard as we have progressed in the kingdom in which the will of God will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

It is an axiom of warfare that any wall which has been erected by men can be penetrated and pierced by other men. I concur with this. Man cannot build what cannot be wrecked. The massive walls of Babylon and Nineveh, the well-defended walls of Rome and Carthage, were breached by hordes who poured through, killing, maiming, raping and pillaging the inhabitants. The wall about Jerusalem, so wondrously constructed by Nehemiah and the willing Jews, fell before the punishing mass of attackers. One can safely predict the utter demolition of any sect which exists only for the defense of error or partial truth. Time, the great sifter of values, relentlessly consigned to the grave the most fantastic defenders, and leaves behind only those who could not care less. Instead of being unduly perturbed when a religious institution grows smaller and is threatened with extinction we should employ our strength in assessing its weaknesses. Every sect is builded upon fear and Robert Frost said, "There's nothing I am afraid of like scared people."

While the "foundation of God standeth sure" and has its seal, the perpetuity of institutional religion has only an evanescent quality of pride. Sects begin in fear and continue in pride. Frequently, the things of which they are proud, should be the source of their shame. The faith in the days when it conquered the world had none of these. Frequently, they multiply at the expense of that faith. A great many religious bodies in our day are kept alive by machinery. It is artificial respiration which maintains their breathing and pulsating.

A body is not judged strong by the power of one member, but by all. A "church" is not strong because it can attract a thousand members, or five thousand, to sit dreamily while listening to a homily directed toward them by one in a flowering robe. Many more go to football games and symphonies. It is not the amount of money extracted from the membership which determines power. Some give because the government allows a discount on taxes and not because they visualize the homeless or

desperately poor searching through trash-dumpsters for scraps of food discarded by the more affluent.

It is pride which places “historic values” ahead of the will of God. The constant emphasis upon “the fathers” of our position is calculated to build arrogance and conceit in the minds of their heirs. The question is not what has been done for us, but what we are doing for others. We handicap our children when we teach them to stand fast in what we have taught them, instead of loving truth for truth’s sake. They should be loyal to the truth if, in the process, they have to stand against us. The day of sects is doomed when we no longer allow fear and pride to dog our steps.

Truth is not the peculiar possession of any man, tribe or race. Like the oxygen which universally sustains physical life if not polluted, it has been granted to all men for their well-being and spiritual life. It should not be filtered nor put through our partisan strainers. We can share our concepts, but we dare not bind them; we can employ them as handles, but not as handcuffs; we can use them for searching but never for shackles. Thus we can allow all men to be free as Christ has set them free!

A Non-Sectarian Approach

Ensign 7 (August 1985): 127

Ensign

Occasionally, when I am speaking on a college campus, I discuss my growing attitude toward a non-partisan, non-sectarian congregation of called-out ones. It tends sometimes to “blow the minds” of the audience. Inevitably, some young man raises his hand and asks the question, “Sir, what would you do if you moved to an area where there was no church such as the one to which you have been accustomed?” I hasten to explain that I am allied with a lot of folk in all stages of spiritual growth. A number of them expect to be saved by the signboard instead of by the cross. It is the name of the letterhead and not the one who was crucified to which they look for salvation.

But I go on to say I have changed my mind about how I should react. It has not been too long ago that I would not have moved to a locality where there was no “loyal church.” I was continually messing in the affairs of others by prophesying doom to them if they did so. I judged the worth of an area by whether or not a group of people who saw things as I did had preceded me. I never thought about what pioneers, who preceded settlers, had found. I had lost the pioneer spirit. I was no longer a frontiersman for Jesus.

If by some fell chance I was plopped down in an area without the beneficent and ennobling influence of “the Lord’s church,” I would have immediately bemoaned the fact that it

was wholly given over to sin and sectarianism. I would have done this without visiting or talking with anyone. One could ascertain by walking his fingers through the Yellow Pages if Jesus had ever come to the community. If he found a group with the “right name” he could soon have determined their faith by dialing and asking how they stood on instrumental music, individual cups, Sunday-school classes or colleges. It did not take a lot of effort to put them in their places.

I would then have written down home and asked them to send a faithful preacher, preferably at their expense. When the preacher arrived we would have spent our time going from house to house and distributing tracts printed in Texas or Tennessee, those two earthly suburbs of the heavenly realm. We would have announced a meeting to be held nightly in a rented hall and would have ended up starting another “church” to help complicate the situation in an area which already had too many. At least we would have had a “loyal church” in town.

I would never do that now. It would make me guilty of a work of the flesh. I have no desire to be such. Instead I want to be an active campaigner for the unity of the Spirit. I would make a list of every legitimate religious organization in the city. I would start visiting them one by one. I would talk with them, share with them, and urge every person to love Jesus and be faithful unto Him. I would commend what I could. What I could not recommend I would mention without rancor or recrimination. I would literally determine to know nothing among them save Jesus and Him crucified. I would be leaven in that community. I would also be salt and light.

Because I personally feel that I ought to remember Jesus in the way He asked me to do, I would observe the Lord’s Supper each week in my home, unless I located others who believed in it. As I became acquainted with those who indicated a desire to follow Him sincerely I would invite them to come and share with me. Each time they came we would engage in talk about His

word for our edification. But I would never ask one of them to leave where he was attending and join with me in planting another religious organization in the city. When asked what I was I would simply remark that I was merely a Christian, a follower of the Lamb.

Of course, this would mean that I would have to repel every clever and adroit move, especially by the clergy, to get me to join a certain group. But I have no inclination to provide another scalp for a sectarian totem pole. I would realize that to ally myself with one would automatically cut me off from the others. So I think holding my present views, I would resist all of the “Hype” and continue to walk in the freedom wherewith Christ has made us free. I would not expect to find any place where there were no hypocrites. The apostles apparently did not either, and they had planted the congregations. There are always some in every group who aspire to be actors which is what the word “hypocrite” really means.

I am not, of course, wholly unaware of the problems I would encounter by pursuing such a course as I have suggested. I do not bind it upon others. They may have a method which would exceed my own in producing results. But, as for me, the course I have outlined seems best. I regret that I grew so old before I began to realize its viability, and, in a very limited way, to begin to practice it. I am firmly convinced of the dynamics of purity and peace. And I realize the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit to drive one toward the heart of God. I am not a part of the Charismatic Movement, but I want my every movement to exhibit charisma.

Believing, as I now do, that there are children of God in all, or most of our divided sectarian bodies, I want to help them unite in Jesus, rather than upon the findings and statements of Luther, Calvin, Wesley or Campbell. It seems to me that I can best do this by remaining a disciple at large. Of course, this will exclude me from meetings which are only for those who

represent a restricted denominational viewpoint, but it will open up unto me great new fields in which I prefer to tread. Freedom is very precious unto me. And one thing that has been lacking has been men with the desire, the willingness and the personal liberty to go among all and sow the seeds of the non-partisan spirit.

All of us are aware of the compromising attitude maintained by so many sectarian bodies in our day. But grave changes are occurring. In all of these are found individuals who are sick and tired of the looseness exhibited. They have seen organizations which stand for nothing and fall for everything. Reformation is in the air. It is almost universally sought. The religious world is looking for someone to say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." They are tired of those who compass land and sea to make proselytes who are more sons of perdition than those who make them.

Obviously, those among us who think that one must either be a member of their organization, or be plunged into the Great Abyss, would shake their heads and lament at what I have said. But I can love the doleful as well as the delightful. So I would not feel badly toward them. Even if they would not speak to me, the streets are filled with those who do, and I do not become lonesome. What I am emphasizing is the fact that one cannot offset sectarianism by being sectarian. And we cannot expect sectarianism to fly away by saying "Shoo!" at it. It is going to take work, hard work—and sweat and blood and tears—to bring order out of the chaos we have helped to develop. I am ready to start on it.

About Symphonies

Ensign 8 (September 1985): 148

Ensign

One of the gravest disappointments I have experienced in my later life is due to the inability of my brethren to recognize that unity in diversity is the only option available to thinking men. Yet, as I listen to their impassioned arguments I can envision myself when I first became a proclaimer of the good news. My insistence that everyone must see everything exactly as our party saw it, built walls out of the very stones which could have been used to erect bridges of understanding. Of course, I have long since renounced my error. I was wrong, just as those who perpetuate the mistake today are wrong.

Lesser animals, guided only by brute instinct, may act identically to circumstances which confront them. But thinking men, influenced by memory and directed by rationality, will not be guided by innate tendencies. All of us have been programmed in the past. And all of the ideas resulting from this enter into our choices and help to direct our lives. We do not turn the dial back to zero when we read the Bible. Inherited prejudices, acquired views, and our reasoning about them, enter in and influence our judgment.

It is for this reason, I think, that every example and metaphor of the “called out ones” acting together, is one of diversity, of a variety and multiplicity of gifts functioning together to achieve the eternal purpose. Take, for example, the

word symphony. It is a transliteration of the Greek *sumphoneo*. It is the word for harmony, concord or agreement. It was first used to designate a musical composition in the early seventeenth century. A symphony consists not of one instrument, but of many. They do not all make the same sound. But they are harmonious. They do not clash or conflict with one another.

I have attended the Saint Louis Symphony a few times. And every time I have gone I have been thankful that the director was not an elder of a local congregation imbued with the idea that unity consists of conformity. He would have everyone “harping on one string” and patrons would start walking out of the hall as thinking men and women have been deserting the religious party for several years. Such a director would soon have the symphony divided into a bunch of little orchestras whose members would be lambasting each other with their violins and challenging for debate over the meaning of a fugue. Beethoven would turn over in his grave. It is a wonder the apostle Paul does not do so.

It is the diversity of instruments playing together which creates the harmony. Harmony is from a remote ancestor *harmos*. It means “a fitting.” Although the Holy Spirit did not use them for examples there are no better illustrations of the original meaning than the watch and automobile. But the Spirit did use the human body. And he began with the concept of diversity. “There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” The members are not alike. They differ in appearance, arrangement and activity. But they fit together and work in unison. When the hand approaches the mouth with a biscuit dipped in gravy, the mouth automatically flies open. It is a good thing it does.

Each member has its own usage. Each possesses its own “gift of grace.” Neither can say to the other, “I have no need of you.” God has set every member in the body as it has pleased him. This ought to create consternation in the hearts of those

who have driven brethren out and offered the callous explanation, "We do not need them anyhow." The body is a tremendous example of a functioning unit in which "all members have not the same office."

There is no such thing as unity by conformity available to thinking men and women. It is a pipe dream of little minds, a figment of an overwrought imagination, and an ill-contrived illusion unauthorized by the Creator of the universe. And it is a universe because it works together, but it can only do so because of the multi-versity of its elements. God no more made us to all think alike than He did to all look alike. The only people who can approach conformity are those who are mental blanks, and who march in lock-step down the street. Men must first be brainwashed before you can get them to yell "Great is Diana of the Ephesians" for two solid hours.

It is a triumph of the ages that men can share in a "unity of the faith" and it is a tribute to the diverse mind that salvation was predicated upon faith rather than upon knowledge. Faith is the belief of testimony. An ignorant, unclad savage from the jungle can listen to the story of Jesus and can believe or reject it, while an elaborate exposition of doctrine and dogma will be as far out of his mental reach as the eagle soaring in the heavens is out of his physical grasp. It is for this reason that preachers in an enlightened and erudite nation have one message while those who deal with jungle tribes have a wholly different one.

And every person on this shrinking globe who believes in Jesus with all of his heart and soul, and who eagerly seeks to do His will as He understands and knows it, is a child of my Father in prospect or reality. And he is my brother in the same way. For wherever my Father has a child there I have a brother or sister. And I have many more than I used to have. The family is growing larger for me at the same time it is growing smaller for others. But, never mind, one day when the light breaks through the fog which clouds their understanding they will also join in

the great family. In the meantime, how they regard me is of little consequence.

The Family of God

Ensign 9 (October 1985): 163

Ensign

With the kind permission of a gracious editor and the tolerant attitude of a spiritual readership I want to pursue the theme I introduced in my previous article. Briefly stated, it is just this. Every metaphor which the Heavenly Father employs to describe the working of those who are joined with Him in the saving of the race is one of a diversity of gifts, functions and services. The Bible nowhere teaches a unity based upon conformity of knowledge, teaching or thought, except as an ideal toward which all of us seek and strive.

The concept of a family is used by the Holy Spirit to describe the relationship we sustain to each other when we answer His call. It is a winsome and appropriate one. But I am of the opinion that the Authorized Version uses the word only once, in Ephesians 3:15. And even there it is a translation of *patria*, a term relating to “fatherhood.” But we need not be a stickler for a specific terminology. The word continually refers to us as sons and daughters of God. We are assured that “as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

There was no quibbling with John about the matter. He knew what he was talking about. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God” (1 John

5:1, 2). We were made part of the family by being born again and through the adoption process. The first shows that we wanted the Father, the second that the Father wanted us. And we were drawn together by a love so majestic and mighty that many of us are still trying in vain to grasp its power.

But the theme of my present dissertation is that while we are all members of that one family, all of us are different. We are not robots working on an assembly line. We were not stamped out by a divine cookie cutter. We are not gingerbread men. We have individuality and personality. We respond to the word of God where we are intellectually, emotionally and spiritually. We are not going to heaven in a clump. We are strung out along the road. We are like any family, sharing with one another, learning from one another. Some of us will never learn because we are incapable of doing so. We will have to be carried across the line.

In every family on earth there are liable to be found crawling infants, children who are just starting to school, adolescents experimenting with life, and those who are maturing into adulthood. All are members of one family because they were born into it, and not because they attained a certain degree of knowledge. They are at different intellectual levels now and they always will be. They are brothers and sisters, they are sons and daughters, because they have the same father and mother, and not because they know the same things. Having a college degree does not make them members of the family.

When I was a child we were always anxious to measure our height in the fond hope that we had gained another half inch. We had our pencil mark on the door frame. There were six children and there were six marks. But none of us thought that we had to attain a certain height in order to become children of our parents. We were loved too much for that. And we know we were measuring brothers and sisters and not aspirants to the relationship. It is only in the family of God that a servant may say, "My Lord delays his coming, and begins to beat the

menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and be drunken.”

The Spirit divides us into fathers, young men, and little children (1 John 2:13, 14). He wrote unto each for a different reason and with a different purpose in mind. He did not, like some preachers, aim a muzzle-loader filled with carpet tacks, at the congregation, and blaze away. That’s why the Holy Spirit is still around while a lot of our preachers are working in grain elevators or filling stations. One of the tragic errors to which we have fallen heir is that of thinking we can cut, whittle and carve everyone into the same identical shape and size. In many places, the moment a man is baptized, he is regarded, not as a babe in Christ, but as a full grown and mature child of God. He is expected, not only to know God’s will but to interpret God’s word according to the peculiarities of the group which baptized him.

What has happened unto the concept enunciated by the Lord? “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” We lump everyone off and demand the same thing of each. The saint who has doggedly plodded the trail for thirty years is put in the same category as the one whose clothes are still hanging on the line, drying after his immersion into Christ Jesus. Jesus makes a clear cut distinction between a servant who knows and doesn’t do and one who does not know. “The servant who knows what his master wants him to do, but does not get himself ready and do it, will be punished with a heavy whipping. But the servant who does not know what his master wants, and yet does something for which he deserves a whipping, will be punished with a light whipping” (Luke 12:47, 48).

The Father loves those who are weak in the faith, as much as he does those who are strong. Those of us who think we are strong are encouraged to bear the infirmities of the weak. On the

basis that Christ pleased not himself, we are taught that every one of us is to please his neighbor for good to edification. I think we could all freely admit that we have forgotten that admonition in the past in our zeal to make one who was weak be right on some point of contention. We have not necessarily considered our neighbor's good. What is good for us is bound to be good for him.

I freely confess that I have been stubborn and recalcitrant toward brothers and sisters who could not agree with me on some doctrinal point. I forgot they were members of the family and regarded them as antagonists. We would never allow our children to fight although they developed a secret code of words and actions, by which they could flay the hide from each other without our being able to determine what they were doing. But they never thought of trying to toss one another out of the family circle. In God's family we were factious, fractious and faulty, and we did not "follow after the things which made for peace."

I am thrilled to realize that God receives many whom we have rejected. We are taught to "receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." That is the solution to all of our problems. We were received to the glory of God. We are to receive others to the same glory. Does fighting, grumbling, hatred and murmuring, react to the divine glory? If not, why engage in them? We are victims of the flesh. It distorts our mind, colors our thinking and perverts our actions. All sectarianism in the world is based on fear. Every sect that has been hatched out came from an egg laid by fear. But perfect love casts out fear. It is the only thing which can do so.

The Kingdom of Heaven

Ensign 10 (November 1985): 203

Ensign

I have been meditating a great deal about the kingdom of heaven recently. I think about it while lying down and when rising up. And I ponder about it while walking by the way. I wrote a book on the theme many years ago. I called it “The Kingdom of the Messiah.” I was quite sectarian when I wrote it, but I filtered most of it out of the volume. People who did not know me did not detect it and I received a number of accolades from them. Members of other factions in what we called “The Lord’s Church” in those days did not react as kindly.

At that time there were two dozen different copyrighted brands of “The Lord’s Church.” Each had its own loyal brethren. Those in the others were called renegades, traitors and heretics, to use some of the more gentle terms. I regarded them that way and, not to be outdone, they repaid the compliment. Those were the days when you also judged a book by its author and not by its contents. If he was a member of your party you read what he wrote, and tried to understand it. There were also “faithful papers” in those days.

Ours was the *Apostolic Review*. We never read the *Gospel Advocate* or *Firm Foundation*. They were edited by the “new digressives.” The “old digressives” were those who made up the Christian Church. Their journal was the *Christian Standard*. If you handled a copy of it you felt sort of defiled and went and

washed in the pan that hung on the back porch.

In those days the kingdom of heaven was like Mauretania, in western Africa, kind of small when compared with its neighbors. It covered only a limited part of the United States and was completely surrounded by the enemy. A lot of them paraded around falsely as Christians. They did not even know the kingdom had come to town since it established its local capital in the Odd Fellows Hall, and hardly bothered to speak civilly with others. But times have changed and a great many brethren are changing too. I do not want to seem too optimistic and have you believe that they receive all whom God receives. But some of them are making friendly overtures and gestures toward those who are descended from the restoration movement started by the facile Barton W. Stone, who was a genial Presbyterian at the time. One wonders where “the Lord’s Church” would have been had it not have been for Presbyterians. Thomas Campbell gave it a real hand by writing “The Declaration and Address.” Later, he said he had been a Calvinist all of his life and expected to continue as one until he died. That would have done him in with many of his ecclesiastical heirs.

We must not confuse the restoration movement with the kingdom of heaven. Many citizens in the kingdom are believers in the restoration movement, but it is not that which makes them a part of the kingdom of heaven. It is faith in Christ. There are thousands in the kingdom who know nothing about the Campbells, but they knew about Jesus. And it is Jesus who is king. There are a great many silly and trivial ideas about the kingdom. A current notion in our day is that the kingdom is suffering from senility and loss of potential. That is because a lot of sects, including our own, are losing membership and growing smaller. That is not an accurate criterion because the United States is not the kingdom of God. It is not even the promised land although a lot of good people from poorly developed countries think that it is. The kingdom is growing rapidly in other parts of the world.

There is one thing which can be affirmed of the kingdom without fear of successful contradiction. The citizens do not see everything alike. They are all in a dither about how the king will return. A vocal minority think that he has already done so with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Many of the rest talk about the pre-millennial coming in order to counter those who opt for the post-millennium. A goodly number claim to be millennial, although they have a hard time spelling it and a harder one explaining it. A lot more are like myself, content to allow the Lord to arrange it as He sees fit and not be saddled by our intricate and tricky explanations.

Some even feel that citizenship is based upon diet. If you eat or drink the right things you are in. If you eat or drink the wrong things you'll be outside looking through the window. One man will have faith enough to eat all kinds of food. A weaker man may eat only vegetables. There are those bold souls who think admission to God's grace is based upon abstinence from wine. They forget that Paul said, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." The apostle did not say "It is not good to drink wine." He said "It is good not to do so." And that under certain circumstances.

The citizens of the kingdom are not all parrots or mynah birds. They are not all mockingbirds either. They do not all chirp the same thing at the same time. Their unity is exemplified in their mutual love and regard for the King. The record tells us that one time sharp contention arose between two of them. They could not even travel the same direction. One sailed to Cyprus. The other went to Syria and Cilicia. But neither of them left Jesus behind because they could not agree on taking a young man with them. Perhaps this was recorded by their official biographer to show us how to get along with the work when we cannot get along with each other. Winning souls for Jesus is more important than winning an argument with brethren.

The United States is composed of more than two hundred million persons. All are part of the same nation. They all have but one capital in Washington. But to argue that everyone in these states thinks alike is silly. The states may be united. The citizens are not. Ronald Reagan and Fritz Mondale debated and scrapped with each other. Geraldine Ferraro and George Bush squared off, although the last suffered from a slight disadvantage. Chivalry is not dead yet. It has been badly wounded and is frayed around the edges. There are some who would rather throw a lady to the dragons than to rescue her from them.

In any event, with the present senators and representatives, no one would be so foolish as to accuse them of seeing everything alike. Yet, all of them are supporters of the United States and quite happy to be. There is no line forming made up of those who want to go to Russia, and when some addle-pated one does, it generally tends to purify the atmosphere. The kingdom of heaven is composed of those who have not yet attained or are already perfect. They press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling. While they lack much, in that where they have attained they are instructed to walk by the same rule and mind the same things. They are a colony of heaven.

Jesus said "Every kingdom divided against itself goes to ruin" (Mat. 12:25). Division is the seed of dissolution. We must find the solution for our schism or suffer the consequences of decay. When the Son of man sends forth his reaping angels they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity. The angels will not throw out those who are ignorant if they could not have learned, or those whose concepts are different if they are honest, but those who purposely baited others and placed stumbling-stones in their way. That word, in the original is *skandalon*. It refers to an object deliberately placed in the path over which one may stumble.

The power inherent in the kingdom is the Spirit of God. We are powerless of ourselves. If we surrender and submit to the Spirit we will overcome. If we refuse to do so we will be overcome. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” “As we have therefore opportunity let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” And, let us never forget that the household of faith embraces many more than the party with which we are affiliated. It is the kingdom of heaven.

The Radical Decision

Ensign 11 (December 1985): 202

Ensign

I crave the tolerance and longsuffering of my readers for the path upon which I now embark. Only the ultimate result could cause one to undertake such a rash venture. I am prompted to do so because of my deep and unquenchable love for truth. My faith in the divine purpose as it affects the earth is unshakeable. If I appear to waver occasionally I trust you will be patient and hear me out.

For several years I have pondered the attitudes of mankind as they have encountered the grace of God as proclaimed in the language of the Spirit through the apostles and prophets. The slowness to comprehend and to manifest a change commensurate with the message have not escaped my attention. I have at last come to the conclusion that the basis for our ineffectiveness lies in the greatest error of the ages regarding the *ekklesia*, the called out ones. They are unable to walk worthy of their calling because the call itself is muted by a multiplicity of alien voices. Most have never heard “the one clear call for me.”

In dealing with the problem of such gravity, the entire world of theology has spent its time analyzing symptoms and probing secondary causes. They have not done this designedly. They were prepared and programmed for it by the history of almost two thousand long and busy years. It is the subject of books that have been written, of classes taught in colleges,

ostensibly to prepare minds to face up to the situation. So we have come to the latter years of the twentieth century ill-prepared to face conditions which surround us. And all about us in this computer age are things we have never faced before. The shrinking world is thrusting us into contact with kindreds, tongues, people and nations we have never previously encountered. It is little wonder that we shrink back or crawl into intellectual caves as surely as did our forebears into rocky dens, when they encountered some strange new animal or circumstance.

Understanding what I am going to say will not suddenly change the situation for us, but it will give us a correct foundation upon which to build. I am not so vain as to conclude that everyone will agree with me at first. Perhaps none will. But I am sure that most will concur with the idea that the forces of those who profess to be followers of the Lamb are in serious trouble today. The Roman Church is under attack as never before. Even the largest Protestant sect is beset with such serious internal difficulties as to threaten her united existence.

There has been a continuous threat to the continuity of the faith since the early centuries, but the attacks of hostile pagan elements have given away to the equally destructive violence of the various divisions of the Christian ranks against each other. So foreign is this to the announced purpose of the Prince of peace that a humanistic age can see no connection between what he did for us all and what his followers are doing to one another. Where did we go wrong? Where were we derailed? I think it is not too much to say that somewhere there was a decision to take the wrong path. All of our current ills derive from traveling along that road, oftentimes in blind trust.

Allow me to make a suggestion. God, has for ancient days, prepared a city on earth as the disseminating center for His word. The ancient city of the Amorites, built upon four hills, and given the name Jerusalem, was that city. So closely identified

with it was God, that it was regarded as His dwelling place upon the earth. It was here He chose to make the greatest sacrifice for man which could be made. And, it was here, by the resurrection from the dead that, according to the spirit of holiness, Jesus was declared to be the Son of God with power.

The apostles were to wait here for the endowment of the Spirit, and beginning here were to proclaim the good news to the farthest reaches of the earth. It was here the announcement was vouchsafed that “God has made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ.” That city became the prototype of “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem” (Heb. 12:22). It was called the city of my God, the holy city, and the great city, the holy Jerusalem. But Satan, the arch-deceiver of the human family, was waiting in the wings to thwart the effort.

He selected Rome as his medium. It was known as “the mistress of the earth.” Its legions had conquered the far-flung regions of the world of mankind. All nations paid tribute into the coffers of this great and powerful empire. Upon the shattered ruins of the pagan empire the Holy Roman Empire lifted itself and stood erect. It became “the Eternal City.” And then, it stole the memory of the Lordship of Jesus, from Jerusalem, and transported it to Rome, where Jesus was created and shaped into the “folk hero” of the mightiest sect on earth. When Alexander Campbell debated Bishop Purcell in Cincinnati, he affirmed that “the Catholic Church” (I blush to use the term) was the first sect, and the mother of all sects. The charge was never satisfactorily countered.

With an arrogance born of power, Rome affirmed that she was the holy, apostolic and catholic church of God on earth. She has not been the only one to make the claim. Actually she was and still is a sect by every fair import of the term. She is not holy. She is not catholic. She is not apostolic. She is a conglomerate created by the union of Judaism, paganism and

Christianity. She is a contradiction in terms. Please understand that I am only speaking of the hierarchical church as an institution. I have no reference to the individual members of it. Many of them are gracious, kind and considerate people.

But from the day that Jesus was made the folk hero of a sect, every reformer was doomed to try and reform this ponderous, bloated juggernaut. And every reformation ended in the creation of a multiplicity of other sects, each one claiming Jesus as head, and each dedicated to perpetual warfare against all of the others. It is but natural that every reformer would announce Jesus Christ as the head of his movement, action, or reformation. But what he was doing was reforming a sect, or a condition arising from a sect. And he was further confusing the scene for simple people who began to accept the tenets of the sect for inferior and unworthy reasons.

In my next article I want to pursue further the results accruing from exchanging Jesus as Lord of the called out community of fellowship planted in Jerusalem for the folk hero of a pseudo-Christian movement promoted by Rome: This was the radical decision from which all our ills are derived. The word “radical” means “root.” A radish is a root vegetable. This decision was the root of all others. I do hope you will read with patience and with a firm resolve to follow the truth regardless of where it leads us. And may the blessings of God abide upon you all, now and forever.

The Second Error

Ensign 1 (January 1986): 3

Ensign

In our previous article we postulated that the cardinal religious error of all times was that of transposing Jesus from the Lord of life and glory into the “folk hero” of a sect. By any method of measuring that sect was powerful and dynamic. It aspired to become catholic, a word meaning universal. But division is built into a sect. It is an inherent ingredient. A sect is a division from the body, so division is built into the body of the sect. It is like inherited cancer. It is in the spiritual genes.

By making a “folk hero” out of Jesus it was possible to use his name in invocation for all kinds of brutality, lust and insensitivity. The conquest of the people along the Rhine, the persecution of the Franks, the cruelty to the Jews in the Inquisition in Spain are all cases in point. Men became like animals in the name of Jesus. The Crusades, now glorified from a distance, were expeditions into rapine, and slaughter, almost unequaled until the time of the Holocaust. The immoral conduct of the kings and noblemen of England was a sad commentary on the Christ whose name was badgered about. The persecution of the Waldensians and Albigensians will always remain as a bloody stain on the raiment of the mother of sects.

The harm done to the body of Christ by Rome is almost incalculable. But the frightful result of the treatment rendered against the head of the body is the greatest tragedy. Trees were

carved into images suspended upon a cross, and the crucifix became an idol before which men genuflected while their hearts were far from him. Days of significance were stolen from pagan gods, and given a veneer or gloss making them acceptable to those who should know better. For, in Christ, there are no holy days, no holy places, no holy things. There are only holy people.

Man being a rational creature, always seeks to improve his lot. Made in the image of his God, but with his feet still mired in the stinking, sucking muck of the world, he struggles for higher ground. He has thought, and planned, and executed great reformation. He has struggled, fought, bled and died for children of his brain. But, always and forever, he has done so with the taint of sectarianism clinging to his garment and polluting the air about him.

Martin Luther effected a tremendous change in the religious climate of his day. He was partially blocked from further changes by the counter-reformation. But his effort, despite his opposition, ended up “a denomination.” To denominate means “to name.” It specifically means “to name in order to distinguish itself from others.” A denomination is, by nature, both inclusive and exclusive. It does not, by use of its name, exclude pagans. It excludes other believers. So, as other reforms grew, the number of names used to denominate also grew.

Some called themselves after the men who began them—Lutherans, Wesleyans, Mennonites and Amish. Some called themselves after the form of government they espoused—Episcopalian and Presbyterian. Others called themselves after an ordinance—Baptists. Others from an event in history—Pentecostals. Others after their constituency—Disciples of Christ. Others by the head of the whole body—Church of Christ. The interesting feature is that everyone of these, seeking identification for the creed which bound them together, used a word as a title which was never used by the Holy Spirit, but was

injected into the version he authorized by King James of England.

The term used by the Spirit for the redeemed and justified ones was *ekklesia*, the called out. It is from *ek*, out, and *kaleo*, to call. The word “church,” on the other hand, is from *kuriakos*, a wholly different term. It was borrowed from the feudal regime of the Middle Ages. It is used now to refer to an institutional system, in which those of a certain intellectual bias, or prejudice, function. There is only one body of the called out, because God does the calling through His Holy Spirit. And God never called anyone into antagonism with another. They were called together in one body. But there can be, and there are, as many churches as there are varieties of opinion.

This is the second profound error of “the people of the Way.” First, they dethroned Jesus from his rightful place. Then they misappropriated a word to describe the body of believers. Satan, the arch-deceiver of the ages, did a clever “snow job” on the saints. It is noteworthy that Alexander Campbell, who believed and vehemently argued that there would never be a real reformation without a revision of the slanted translations generally in use, brought to America the work of Dr. George Campbell, James McKnight and Philip Doddridge. He published it under the title of “Living Oracles.” The word “church” nowhere occurs in it. But the virus of ecclesiasticism had so affected men that it did not catch on. Soon the movement which began as a simple “Association” became a “church” and was caught up in all the rivalry for prominence.

It is obvious that the prayer for the unity of believers can never be answered so long as there is a Presbyterian Church, a Methodist Church, a Baptist Church, a Pentecostal Church, a Church of God, a Christian Church, or a Church of Christ, in existence. So long as these exist and vie for place and fortune in the spotlight of the media, we can dismiss the unity of believers as the forlorn dream of an unrealistic enthusiast. Unwittingly, all

have become a part of the modern Babylon and confusion of tongues prevails among them.

Babylon represents the first great power which attacked, captured and destroyed Jerusalem. God had a people in physical Babylon. He still has a people in spiritual Babylon. But they are not those who believe they are still in Jerusalem. The sects, the schisms, the denominations of today will never grow into the body of Christ. Not one of them will be chosen as his bride. Not one will be at the marriage feast of the Lamb. They are condemned to work harder and grow smaller, to put their money into bags which have holes in them. The frenzied efforts of leading men in each sect will only serve to bankrupt it with no comparative gain being recognized. The brethren, regardless of the names by which they denominate themselves, are whistling in the cemetery at dusk. But there is no rustle among the gravestones. The dead go on sleeping, quietly and undisturbed.

What is the solution to our problem? Is there one? Or, are we doomed to go on perpetuating division, lending to it, encouraging it? Is it obvious we can never be used as instruments of peace until we are willing to humbly acknowledge that we were deluded into becoming part of the problem. We must renounce as a part of our strategy the idea that we shall win everyone to our way of thinking. There are actually two things we can do. Both of them have to do with our development of a proper perspective.

We can begin to see Jesus as the Lord of the whole new creation and not just as the figurehead of a faction. And we can realize that all who believe in Him and recognize Him as having been made our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, are certainly facing in the right direction. He is, therefore, the prime object of our devotion. Everything else is of secondary import. He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. He is the Way, the truth and the life. These have become a part of our vocabulary of

scripture, now they must become a part of our vocation of service.

We can stop thinking of “our movement” as “the church of the firstborn ones whose names are written in heaven” and regard it as a breakthrough in the lives of certain of the called-out ones. It was at a certain historical moment when everything was ready. It always is. They were not the only called-out ones when they began and their heirs have never been the only called-out ones in any generation since. Let us reject the humanly-satisfying and flattering thought that we alone are the people of God and allow God to be the judge. “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?” Let us begin to follow after the things which make for peace and things wherewith one may edify another.

The Elusive Fascination

Ensign 2 (February 1986): 27

Ensign

The church of God has been captivated and enthralled for years by the appealing dream that the earliest communities of the saints demonstrated a pattern which they can capture and perpetuate today. In my younger and balmier days I used to try to badger people into debating with me the proposition that the church I represented was identical in origin, name, doctrine and practice with the new testament scriptures. Most of us thought we had discovered and were practicing the pure and unadulterated pattern, but about the only thing we were continuing to project was the sharp contention such as involved Paul and Barnabas at Antioch, which caused them to “depart asunder from one another.” We had that part of the apostolic practice down to perfection.

We were modern alchemists. Those of the Middle Ages devoted themselves unceasingly to experimentation in an attempt to turn base metals into gold, and to find a universal solvent. They labored in vain. Many outstanding saints in various sects have done the same thing in an attempt to discover the “divine pattern” of the primitive ekklesia. Their efforts have only resulted in the creation and propagation of other sects, each one more hateful and narrower than the preceding ones. They have succeeded only in fastening the chain which binds us to a certain time in history.

There is a fallacy of substitution which has tripped up every succeeding reformer. A book has been substituted for a man. The written word about a man has been substituted for the Living Word who is that Man. This has resulted in faith in a system rather than in a Savior. We have forgotten Paul's determination which was "not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." The result is that inevitably our faith stands in the wisdom of men, rather than in the power of God. The best expositor, the ablest proclaimer, the most erudite teacher attracts us. And it is only when our idol demonstrates his feet of clay, that we hastily select another, and follow blindly in his wake.

When the faithful John saw heaven opened, he beheld a white horse. The name of the one astride him was called "Faithful and True." The armies of heaven followed him. They were also upon white horses. They were clothed in pure linen, clean and spotless. Their leader wore a vesture dipped in blood. His name was also called the Word of God. Theos-Logos. He is my theology. Just as you cannot reduce any person to a book, so He is greater than anything written about Him. It was the disciple who saw this great calvary processional who said that if every thing which Jesus did should be written, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

He is also my pattern. I take no stock in the learned speech of university instructors who talk about various "theologians" of this and that. Unless they are embraced in Him, they have no drawing power for me. They are speculative toys which grown men manipulate and with which they while away their time. I am not attracted to them or by them. I read the book because it speaks of Him. I love it because I love Him. I want to "know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." "And it is not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after."

I may misunderstand much that I read. I am convinced that I do. But I know who Jesus is. If the greatest question ever asked was “What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?” I am ready with my answer. We tend to become hooked on the Book. We memorize and quote glibly the passages which seem to us to lend support to our systems. That is a strategem which has been learned by Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists— even Catholics. It is a practice perpetuated in our schools to train preachers. All of us do it— and all deny it. We have to find a pattern even if we have to invent it and plant it on the sacred pages.

If we can ever reach the point in our thinking where we can see the people who first heard and joyously accepted the Good News as folks like ourselves we will take a great step forward. There were sharp reasoners, ignorant peasants and cloudy thinkers among them. Some were retarded. Some were slow to think. Some misunderstood what Jesus said (John 21:23). There were as many types of sinners among them as there are among us. The primitive ekklesia was not a pattern of perfection, but a pattern of struggling humanity with a new role model— Jesus Christ. They were to look unto Jesus. He was the pioneer and perfecter of their faith. He was the trailblazer who had gone ahead and blazed the trees along the way.

A goodly number of people have the mistaken notion that eternal life is the result of reading, knowing and quoting the sacred scriptures. They aspire to become walking Bibles. There is certainly nothing wrong with familiarizing oneself with what Jesus said or the apostles wrote, but one should not mistake them for the source of life. John said that “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” There is nothing to be gained by becoming a twentieth century Pharisee. Jesus said to their first century progenitors, “You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; but they are they which testify of me.” He added an observation in sadness. “But you will not come to me that you might have life.” The modern church is crawling with Pharisees who look for a plan of salvation and

ignore the Man who alone can save. They depend upon what they know rather than upon Him in whom they should believe.

The Law Fulfilled

Ensign 4 (April 1986): 63

Ensign

It was a difficult thing to be a believer in Rome. The apostle who wrote to the “called ones” leaves no doubt about it in his letter to them. Political pressures and social unacceptance made life less than easy for the followers of Jesus. The fact that they were looked upon as but another sect of the Jews made for an uneasy existence. They had no recourse to the highly lauded Roman law. It was amazing that they were so “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.”

Certainly the more peaceable and quiet they could be, and the less public notice they attracted to themselves, the better off they would be. They were admonished to discharge their obligations to all men. “Pay tax and toll, reverence and respect to those to whom they are due.” Some have been elevated to a place of legal authority by the fortunes of birth, by their own ambitious working, or by the selection of their peers. Deference is their due. We do not gain the blessing of God by resenting earthly magistrates or by refusing to pay our taxes. Heaven is not gained by evading income tax on earth. We must be subject to rulers not only because of fear of their exploding wrath, but also for conscience’ sake.

It is while dealing with this facet of behavior that the apostle reaches a peak in his presentation. After telling us to pay

taxes and customs assessments, he informs us that we must owe no man anything. That creates quite a bit of consternation in our world when “buying on time” or “floating a loan” for everything from an automobile to a house, is the order of the day. All of the media hype is contrary to it, and the modern “use it while paying for it” generally carries us along on the crest of the wave. It just does not read like Mastercard or Visa advertisements. It is not my intention to try and figure out what all is involved in the statement. I want to get on to the positive!

Love one another! Love is the due of every man! It is his right, not because I borrowed from him, but because he is a man, made in the image of God. He may have obscured that image. It may be fragile, cracked or broken. It may be shattered to bits. But I still have a debt to pay him. It is not a matter of a specific law, or a written command. It transcends law. Men who believe that the authority of Jesus is manifested in a specific law in a written code are always looking for a loophole. And they always find it, or imagine it, or invent it. And they get “off the hook.” They can dust off their hands and go merrily on their way ignoring the brother. Or worse yet, they can say, “Oh, I love everyone,” when in reality they think only of themselves. They are everyone in their own sight.

But Paul affirms that “He that loveth another has fulfilled the law.” He has satisfied every claim of the law. The apostle mentions the commands against adultery, killing, stealing, bearing false witness and coveting. All of these are social in nature. They deal with personal relationships. The clever evader thinks he sees an escape hatch here. But Paul goes on to say, “if there be any other commandment.” That does it! Whatever command you can drum up or dream up is comprehended in the saying “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” The word comprehend is from *com*, together; and *prehendere*, to include or grasp. Everything else is included. It merely needs activation, not explanation!

The purpose of the law ideally was to effect the common good. It was to eliminate injustice, unfairness and greediness. The legal system was to insure that evil did not triumph. It was to make it impossible to work ill to a neighbor. And, because love cannot wrong a neighbor it is the fulfilling of that ideal. But that is negative. All law dealing with treatment of another is negative. It is impossible to make a man be good to another by law. You can only make him wish he had been. Law is external. It is like a bandage applied to a wound.

But love is internal. All of us who have read after the trenchant J. B. Phillips and C. S. Lewis, know that there are four kinds of love. But the one Paul speaks of here is *agapao*. It is the love which reaches out to the unlovable. It is creative as was its original author. It does not search and seek out for the quality in another which it can love. It creates that quality as God did in us. "For God so loved the world." And when it has created it, love gives to meet the need. God actually gave His Son. We give whatever is necessary to reclaim or redeem the personality, not because a law says to do it, for that would be impossible, but because we ourselves have been redeemed by the greatest giver of all. We do not say "I love you because I need you," but rather, "I need you because I love you." Think upon that until it governs your conscience and guides your conduct. Agape is the active and beneficent good will which stop, at nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object.

We are no longer subject to a written code, or set of rules. A written code is a policeman. It is a patrolman, a jailer, a custodian. When the world was immature and childish it was under tutors and governors. But it grew up. The fulness of time came. God sent His Son to redeem them that were under the law. We have received the adoption of sons. We are no more slaves. Faith came and the custodian died. It was Jesus who rose from the dead, not the law. Now love does what the law could not. It transforms us. It makes us children like the Father.

In the version which King James of England arranged, the translators quaintly use the language which was current in 1611 A.D. "Let love be without dissimulation." I have never heard anyone talk that way. Now we say, "Let love be free from hypocrisy." It is not easy to do. We are so accustomed to feign or pretend love for those whom we secretly despise, that we find ourselves walking in the same well-known rut in spite of our knowledge. But I am convinced that genuine love for all men is the only cure for all of the world's ills, not because the law commands it, but because Jesus enjoins and exemplifies it. Lord, help me to love!

Judging Others

Ensign 5 (May 1986): 91

Ensign

In recent months there has been a renewed interest in getting together two of the factions growing out of the restoration movement launched by Barton W. Stone and Thomas and Alexander Campbell as a result of the Second Great Awakening. I am all for it. I rejoice and praise God for every meeting that is held. However, the meetings need to be viewed in the proper perspective. Among those who do not use instrumental music only one segment is generally involved. There are at least 23 others who have not shown up. They do not regard God's precious children in the Christian Churches as brethren. They look upon those who meet with them from Churches of Christ as brethren in error.

But it is only fair to point out that the old timers in each of the 23 segments also regard those in the other 22 as "brethren in error." They would not meet with any of them lest they be defiled. They are free from all error in their own sight. They do not propose to endanger themselves. I know, because I was once one of them. Moreover, not everyone in the faction which is meeting with the brethren is overjoyed and happy about it. There is a lot of carping and criticism among some of the mainline churches. The use of the term "mainline" should be understood. One should not get a picture of a railroad track running straight from earth into the pearly gates with no detour along the way. The mainline churches just happen to have most

of the money, the para-church organizations, the promotional schemes and the powerful preachers. It is these things which make them mainliners— or hard liners!

It is also necessary to realize that even if a working agreement is reached by the two groups, it will not even begin to affect the whole body. There will be multiplied thousands— even millions— of the called out ones who will know nothing about it. They also are a part of the sectarian division, but they are as much a part of God's family as any of the rest of us. They got their partisan start at a different time, a different place, and by different men than we did. How fortunate it would have been if they were begun by good Presbyterians like Thomas and Alexander Campbell. Then they would have been like us, and could have fought and divided over the same things as we did. But God is not limited to Cane Ridge, Kentucky, or to Washington, Pennsylvania, for renewal of the ekklesia on earth. We are thrilled, however, that our "closer brethren" are working on our differences. It might eventually affect the entire community of Christ for good. And there is only one body of Christ on earth. There will never be another. It is only men who get tangled up in their thinking as to who is in it.

It would go a long way toward promoting "peace on earth among men of good will" if those who act so graciously toward others when away at a meeting would begin to practice it at home. Romans 14:5 needs worldwide practice. It instead of holding forth on contrived diatribes entitled "Why We Do Not Use Instrumental Music," to prove they are still loyal, they would invite the preacher who uses it to speak for them, and go over and speak for his congregation, they would no doubt do more good. At least they would not be throwing an armful of brush on the fire to keep the flame renewed.

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? Other brethren who meet at a different location, or across town, do not belong to us. We did not suffer for them. We did not purchase

them. We did not educate them. They are not ours. And when we engage in long distance judgment and criticism of them we are out of our place. Who knows but what if given the same identical atmosphere in which they grew up we might have practiced the same things as they do, and even a whole lot more, that we are now ready to condemn.

They are simply not ours to order around or to assail. They belong to someone else. If He wants to discipline them it is His business. He has not turned them over to us to get on the radio and attack them. Generally speaking, it is asinine, costly and silly to do that anyhow. I have never known of a congregation giving up a practice because it was attacked over the air waves by a screaming, yelling, tablepounding individual. Generally he only embarrasses the thinking members of his own group and “sets in concrete” the resolves of the others.

The question “Who are you?” is generally put in our day, “Who do you think you are?” Some preachers are a little like wasps— bigger when first hatched out than at any other time. One who is just out of school, and filled with second-hand knowledge he has collected, feels obligated to mount his trusty steed and go galloping through the country, jousting with everyone who differs with him on any particular. Some times it is necessary to have three or four horses shot out from under him before he comes to his senses. He can then see that he has been assailing the servant of another and fighting on the wrong side of the fence.

One of the most difficult things to learn is that God is interested in persons, and not things. Even the things He commanded make Him tired and disgusted (Isaiah 1:12) when done out of mere habit. What we naively and incorrectly call “going to church” He calls “trampling around in my temple.” Those whom we criticize because they eat things we do not, or do not eat things we can, do not stand or fall to us. One of the most common questions we ask among ourselves, is, “How does he

stand on this or that— instrumental music, the one-man pastor system, or premillennialism?” May I suggest that it might not be any of our business. It only becomes our business when we become sectarian. Washing your hands in the proper way was important to the Pharisees. But Jesus said, “To eat without washing your hands as they say you should— this doesn’t make a person unclean.”

He shall be holden up! Many whom we refuse, God receives. He holds up those whom we push down. He takes in those whom we cast out. Historically, we made our most crucial error as a movement when we decided that those who accepted certain ideas would no longer be regarded as brethren. That day we started playing God with other people’s lives. Then and there we subscribed to another creed than Christ. On what ground can we reject as brethren those who have the same father as ourselves? Can a person who is truly sincere about thinking a certain thing be read out of the family? Is conformity the ground for acceptance? If so, who is to conform to who? That’s a little bit like parents throwing a child out or cutting him off in the will because he believes the world is flat.

God is able to make him stand. Our power of rejection does not begin to equal God’s ability to receive. Let us look over the congregation and resolve that God has accepted them all, not on the basis of what they think but upon the grounds of Him whom they know. Jesus died for all of them. If we, by any overt action, drive them away, we will be the object of God’s displeasure. This should give ground for careful thought to anyone who would be guilty of dividing the body over matters of opinion or personal preference. Like Hagar, we should remember that “Thou God seest me,” for otherwise, like Haman, we may be hanged on the gallows we have constructed for another.

Respecting the Conscience

Ensign 6 (June 1986): 111

Ensign

The apostle Paul knew, perhaps instinctively, that there was nothing unclean of itself. He was also persuaded by Jesus that this was true. He did not use the Greek word *katharos*, pure. It has come down to us as cathartic, a medicine which is purgative in effect. But in Romans 14:14 Paul uses *koinon*, common or profane. We know it best in conjunction with koine Greek. The language in which the new covenant scriptures were given. It is the speech of the street or the dock, as contrasted with that of the philosophers.

The term “profane” is a good one, if correctly understood. It literally means before (that is, outside) the temple. When a heathen approached the temple of his idol, everything he took into the temple was consecrated. The priests, who were generally numerous and well organized, could lay claim to it. The worshiper laid up outside the things he wanted to keep. The word “fane” is the word for temple, so profane literally means “before the temple.” Paul declared that nothing is intentionally corrupt, desecrated or unworthy of use. It was not intrinsically or inherently unclean.

But he also recognizes that while there is no difference in things there is in the people who use them. Love forces us to realize that some may entertain a doubt or uncertainty about the moral right or duty involved in doing certain things. Although

my conscience may be absolutely free, theirs may condemn them. I personally know of a convert to Christ from the Islamic tradition who cannot eat pork. And if he cannot gain consent of his conscience he ought not to do it!

To respect the varying consciences of men is an act of reverence toward God. Under no circumstance should we ever try to cajole, coax or wheedle one into violating his conscience. To do so is to make him a slave. Moral discrimination makes one like God. Lack of it reduces him to the level of an animal. I have no right to flaunt my eating habits before brethren who are conscientiously opposed to the content of my meals. I am to exhibit love wherever I am. If a brother objects to eating steak I have no right to invite him to a steak dinner. It is an uncharitable act to do so. I can open a can of tomato soup. It will not kill me to eat asparagus once in awhile, although if I had to do so regularly I might pray to go home where, hopefully, they do not have it!

I must get my sense of values straightened out. If I have a slab of pork roast and a brother gags at it, I should not say "Let him gag," while I go on and pack it away. Jesus did not die for cows and hogs, but for persons. If there is a question which I shall like most, His death on the cross settled it long before I was eating at all. I am not to destroy a brother with my meat or any other thing. Jesus did not die for things or acts, but for persons. He may tolerate my eating habits, and I hope He does, but He died for men.

If I misinterpret my freedom and argue that I'll eat what I please, regardless of the attitude of anyone else, I make my good the subject of bitter criticism and rude bickering. I should never allow myself to be maneuvered into such a place where my good becomes the occasion of another's evil. That very thing is at the center of most church trouble. Some dear soul becomes so imbued with the righteousness of his cause on a certain matter that he decides to scatter it about like raindrops upon others.

Unfortunately they do not see it as being that important and hoist an umbrella against it. The result is that a fight results which only eternity will settle. It will be settled then for certain!

There seems always to have been a question as to the constitution of the kingdom of God. Is it made up of tangibles? Material or immaterial? Most of the fights in which we have been engaged have been over things we could apprehend by our senses. They have been sensual rather than spiritual. They deal with what the saints may use in showing their appreciation to God, in instructing themselves or their children. They have all been selective and arbitrary. If they had not been we would have ended up back in Antioch or Pergamos with no “church structures” and reading the word from parchment scrolls.

The letter to the Romans tells us what the kingdom of God is not. It is not meat and drink. The King of kings does not preside over such matters. I do not for a moment think this means that you cannot eat a hamburger or drink a glass of Kool-Aid on “Church property.” Where do we get the term “church property” anyhow? It does not appear in the sacred scriptures. Meetings were held in homes where they ate and drank every day. For that matter, where did we get the word “church”? It was not born in a translation of the Word until 1611 and as a product of King James. We have been carried away in our mental meanderings. Like children we have been fighting over toys of our own invention. It is time that we grow up. It may be too late for some.

The kingdom of God is righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If that sentence were understood by the saints on earth it would be enough to cause the angelic choir to burst forth in a hymn of praise. The rule of God in the universe embraces three things. Righteousness is not just doing right things. It is a relationship with the divine of those who are renewed in the spirit of their mind, and who have put on the new man. It is created by God in true holiness, not in empty pretence (Eph.

4:23, 24).

Peace is not merely cessation from hostility. It is not an agreement to stop fighting. It is a healing unguent, the balm of Gilead to anoint a place of inflammation. It is astringent and soothing. Joy is that gladness produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is a fruit of that Comforter who abides within. These three ingredients compose the Kingdom. Sad indeed is it when they become sublimated to unworthy attributes. He who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

Making Up Your Mind

Ensign 7 (August 1986): 123

Ensign

During my early sojourn I have been a member of a number of congregations. All of them claimed to love the Lord, yet all were different. I recall one rural group of my boyhood days which had two elders. Each of these felt that he was divinely called to protect the cause for Christ. It probably would not have created a ripple in the one body if it had been saved or gone down the drain, as it eventually did when everyone moved to town and most of the young people married and “went over the hill.”

We had what we called mutual ministry. In this case that meant that the elders took turns edifying the flock, or, as one brother who was mentally ill, put it, “crucifying the church.” The elders differed seriously about one thing. One of them held that the Lord’s Day was sacred, as the sabbath had been to the Jews. He would hoist an ox or an ass out of a ditch if one fell in, but, aside from that, a visit to his place was like going to a mortuary on Sunday. It was a real test of the survival of the fittest.

The other thought that Sunday had been made for man, and not the reverse. If one attended the meeting and partook of the Lord’s Supper, he was free to harvest his crop, doctor a sick mule, or take his gun and stroll through the orchard hunting the rest of the day. Each Sunday, the one who was speaking,

belabored us with his theory, working it into his talk in one way or another. We could sleep in blissful content until he finished. We listened to them so much that when a visiting speaker talked about the prodigal son we thought he was unscriptural.

It was several years before I grew up to seriously think about the new covenant scriptures for myself, and many more until I could realize the great difference between the covenant which was not written with pen and ink, and the scriptures which obviously were. It took a lot of meditation and maturation before I could understand that “the handwriting of ordinances” nailed to the cross had not risen from the dead. It was the One who nailed them there who arose. We are no longer under the biting lash of a written code. We are under the loving care of a living lord.

But, even as I read the guidelines along the highway of life I could see how pitifully the two elders of my earlier days had missed the essence of the faith. In a section of Romans 14, the record states, “One person thinks that a certain day is more important than other days, while someone else thinks that all days are the same.” Paul’s first admonition is, “Each one should firmly make up his own mind.” It is difficult to make up the mind of another for him. Even grabbing him around the neck and choking him will not help. The sacredness of the human mind is superior to that of certain days.

One who believes that God has invested a certain day with special honor thereby glorifies the Maker. One who believes that He has invested them all with equal honor thereby glorifies Him. In honoring the seven He honors the one. He who regards the day regards it unto the Lord. He who does not regard the day regards it not unto the Lord. The Lord is supreme. He alone is sovereign. So no man lives unto himself and no man dies unto himself. If we live it is unto the Lord. If we die it is unto the Lord. Whether we live, or die, we are the Lord’s.

It is not that we are the Lord's whether we believe in the premillennial theory, or in Sunday school classes. It is whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. Anyone who is in Jesus through faith, must live or die in Him. It was to this end Christ died, and rose, and revived, that He might be lord both of the dead and of the living. Anything that is not as important as life or death is something Jesus did not die for. Before we divide the body of Jesus we should ask ourselves if it is "a life or death matter." If we "think" soberly, as "God has dealt to every man a measure of faith" we may conclude that it is a theological quirk we are trying to impose upon those who do not want it, and who will come to resent us for it.

It is useless to fight over matters of opinion. If we are for a thing we have no right to "set at nought the one who cannot see it." If we are opposed to it we have no right to judge the one who is for it. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. We are not lower courts in God's system of jurisprudence. We do not have to try brethren in advance. It is not our prerogative to sentence them or to banish them to "outer darkness" ahead of time. Every knee shall bow to Him, not to us. Every tongue shall confess to Him, not to us.

The apostle urges in verse 13, "Let us not therefore judge one another any more." Because the judgment of Christ is reserved and because it is universal, we not only need not, but we should not, judge one another on this earth. It is absurd and foolish for us to thrust ourselves forward and assume the function of the Son of God. We are to receive one another, not reject one another. It is not a question of a perfect disciple accepting imperfect ones. It is a matter of imperfect disciples accepting other imperfect ones. None of us is perfect.

Sometimes we are asked, "But why cannot the brother who holds a contrary opinion give it up for the sake of peace and order?" The answer is simply that it is impossible. A man's opinions become part of himself. He can no more willingly give

up an opinion than he can cut off his hand or foot. He can sublimate it, hold it in reserve, refuse to advocate it, but he cannot surrender it. That is why he is told to have “it to thyself alone.” We may present a contrary opinion, but we have no right to bind it upon another. And he has no right to bind his opinions upon us. We must all learn that opinions may be held but never bound.

The divine prescription is “that no man put a stumblingblock or occasion to fall in a brother’s way.” We can do this wittingly or unknowingly but we are told not to do it at all. If a man puts a handful of tacks in a pocket with a hole in it, he should not be surprised that the cars which come along suddenly develop flat tires. We are not to scatter argumentative bricks or cobble-stones along the pathway on which people walk. Some may become discouraged and drop out of the race. It is better to lose an argument than to lose a brother.

The Strong and Weak

Ensign 8 (September 1986): 143

Ensign

The fourteenth chapter of the letter to the Romans provides a powerful antidote for quarrels and strife. It is a divine prescription to tell us how to get along with those brethren with whom we cannot agree. Properly understood and diligently applied it would eliminate most problems and disputes among brethren. It postulates that there are two kinds of brethren in the faith—the weak and the strong. They are not always the same. Sometimes one who is strong on one matter will be weak on another, and vice versa.

“Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye.” There is a difference between being weak in faith and weak in the faith. The man who is “weak in the faith” may be quite thoroughly convinced of all the facts concerning Jesus, but being a shy, reluctant or frightened attitude he is not as sure that he is able to distinguish all that is involved in the choices or options that are his. He realizes that he has been set free but he is not sure of just how free, or from what. The apostle who wrote this is not concerned about straightening out all of the points of controversy. He is only interested in our receiving each other regardless of those matters.

He is also anxious that we receive a brother for the right purpose. And that is not to argue with him about his doubts. It is not to dispute with him about matters which pertain to his

personal conscience. We should never take the position, “Let the contrary rascal come on in and we’ll straighten him out on the issues, or die trying.” Even the Holy Roman Empire had to abandon the rack and thumb-screw because of their ineffectiveness. This scriptural section closes with the calm advice to “receive one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (15:7).

It is evident that Christ received us before we had everything all sorted out. Most of us still do not know which keg to throw some things in. Occasionally we take something out of one and put it in the other, or lay it on the shelf until we decide where it belongs. It is not necessary that we know where every thing belongs, if we really belong to Christ. Faith is a relationship to a person and not a rearrangement of things. Have you watched a little child abandon a bunch of toys scattered over the floor and run to the safety of its mother’s arms? We have been fighting over mental toys for years and ignoring the Christ who received us. No wonder we missed the glory unto which we were called.

The fact is that all of us make changes in our attitudes as we sharpen our own sense of right and wrong, and grow up. For instance I was reared to believe that anything which even looked like a movie was sinful. Now I hope that I can distinguish between the harmful and educational ones. When I was a lad Sunday was a “holy day.” It was one of the dreariest days of the week. Children looked forward to it with dread and foreboding. It was a day to which we were sentenced because of our unrestrained joy during the six days preceding it. We couldn’t even play with the dog without being told to “Stop that!” We envied the little kids who were fortunate enough to have parents who were infidels. I no longer hold to that view since, in Christ, there are no holy days, holy places or holy things— only holy people.

I have a translation of Romans 14:1 which reads,

**“Welcome him who is weak but not to argue about his scruples.”
I like that.**

The word scruples is from scrupulous, a little pebble in the shoe. Have you ever seen anyone trying to walk with a small rock in his boot? He goes limping along, and finds it difficult to keep up with the crowd. The apostle is simply urging that we have no right to wrestle him to the ground, remove his boot by force and shake the pebble out of it. He might prefer to walk with a rock in his brogans, regarding it as a part of the price one has to pay for following the Lord in the twentieth century. There are self-made martyrs.

I admit to having some trouble implementing the instruction given in Romans 14:1. My problem is I cannot find anyone who admits to being weak. All of them think I am. Take any of the modern issues about which we quibble— Sunday school classes, one cup, instrumental music. You can add to the list all of the matters which are problems in your area. There will probably be a hundred or so, more or less. One thing we do not lack in these days are toys! But if you even mention these, its advocate is all over you like a setting hen on a marauding tomcat. And do not tell him that you are trying to treat him as a weak brother!

The items of division have changed since Paul wrote. Then, the strong man believed he could eat all things. He saw no need to “abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving.” He backed off from nothing! He did not eat everything, but he believed he could. Nothing was ceremonially unclean or forbidden to him. That was before the white-coated experts in laboratories warned against the consumption of red meats. Now the one who ate meats would have to head for Long John Silver’s.

Meanwhile, the man who was weak ate only vegetables. I know some who still do. But they do not think of themselves as

being weak. They regard themselves as the strongest people in the community as they munch their asparagus tips and raw carrots. They look forward to entering the glory waving a bunch of celery. They do not “bug” me except by their reproachful glances as I crunch my Wendy’s hamburger, slathered with mustard, pickle and onion.

Just as there are meat-eaters and herb-eaters, so there are generally two ways of treating those who differ. The tendency is for those who eat meats to despise those who cannot, and for those who cannot eat meats to sit in judgment upon those who do. In our days those who eat call the others hobbyists. Those who do not call the others sectarians. A sectarian is one who does something we oppose. A hobbyist is one who opposes something we do. This is invariably true.

It guarantees that each of us will have a string of sectarians leading us and a string of hobbyists following us. The more educated among us call these last “extremists.” They have outgrown the “hobbyist.”

This operates to keep us at the same degree of knowledge (or ignorance) all of the time. All of us are scared out of our wits by our brethren. We are afraid of being despised by some and of being judged by others. We would rather be shot at sunrise than preached to at sunset. It is only when you get as old as I am that you are truly free. By that time you have outlived most of your critics and the others are all senile. You can readily agree by that time that whether a man majors in pork chops or specializes in vegetable soup that “God has received him.” You can also eat what you like— when you are by yourself.

The same thing holds true for instrumental music, classes, colleges, and all the rest of the motley group of things which have been sanctified by generations of argument. It is a great relief to realize that brotherhood is based upon a common Fatherhood and not upon the same degree of digestion. And it

saves a lot of time snooping around to see whether one has ham cooked in his turnip greens when we realize that God receives all kinds of eaters. Many a man has missed his own dinner by being too concerned about what others ate— or played, or taught, or advocated in class. It would really be a tragedy if we missed dinner over here and heaven over there by messing around where we had no business.

Peace and Edification

Ensign 9 (October 1986): 163

Ensign

I have been writing about the things mentioned in Romans 14. I am not wholly satisfied with my deductions, but I still believe in what the apostle said, despite my feebleness in applying the precepts. The twenty three verses composing the chapter, when properly grasped, will eliminate all stress and tension, and make possible for a congregation to live together in harmony and peace. The nineteenth verse urges us to pursue two kinds of things— those which make for peace and those which edify.

When I feel under compulsion to harp about some view or opinion I am obligated to go beyond asking whether it is right. Obviously I will not advocate anything which I believe to be blatant error. But, even if I think it is correct I should ask myself if what I am prepared to say will contribute to the peace and edification of the saints. A great many things which may prove to be right will not contribute to the tranquility and upbuilding of the assembly. To do the first they must not be contrary to the way others view them. To do the second they must be perceived as having some value in a positive way. They must contribute to growth and spiritual expansion.

If they do not I should not pursue them farther at the time. Circumstances may change. A more expeditious climate may be provided later. If not, they may die with me without doing me

any harm. I have never known an idea to explode in a casket or to blow a hole in a sepulcher. If advocated they may cause the congregation to erupt with volcanic force. It may be ripped apart and smashed to smithereens. It may never recover. There are countless incidents which all of us can recall of the fragmentation of fellowship by injudicious use of things or advocacy of ideas which saints were not ready to accept.

Years ago I knew an elder's wife who was a past master at making bratwurst, as people referred to sausage in the German community where she lived. She always took it to the basket dinners which were held periodically. It was downright delicious. But in the same congregation there was an eccentric. He had never married. He was a confirmed vegetarian. He carefully abstained from all meats. The sister, not content to feed those like myself, who enjoyed her smoked sausage sought to force it on the one who opposed meats. One day he got all of her teasing and cajoling he could take and slapped her. Before it was all over the congregation came unglued, people in the community took sides, and the day of spiritual growth was over and done. As one deacon, who was quite a punster put it, "It was the wurst thing that ever happened."

No meat is good enough to destroy the work of God over. Not even extra crispy fried chicken by Colonel Sanders. And not even a beef roast cooked with potatoes and onions, saturated with rich brown gravy which generally trickles down your tie. Souls are worth a lot more than things which tickle the appetite or tempt the palate. The word of God is not founded on dietary intake. It is dependent upon what you are and not upon what you eat. If a man wants to eat only salads, and brag about them, that is his business, provided that he does not slap the hot dog covered with mustard out of my hand.

Even things which are pure become evil when eaten with offence. It is not enough to rant and rave and argue that what you are eating is not impure. The real Question is what your

brother thinks of it. Your eating is to be regulated by his thinking. To put it another way, your consumption depends upon his presumption. Never mind the fact that he may be “flaky” in his thinking. He is your brother. And if you start eliminating all the flaky and screwy ones there might not be enough left to have a volleyball game at the next picnic. We might be sitting on the sidelines grumbling.

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” This does not say “It is not good to drink wine.” Rather, it is good not to under certain circumstances. I am persuaded that the Word nowhere teaches that the use of wine as a beverage is a sin. Drinking to an excess is a sin. So is eating to the excess. That is the problem a lot of us have. I admit to being one of them. Nell, who hasn’t gained three pounds since we were married 58 years ago, is my constant reminder that I have picked up about 60 pounds, an average of a pound per year in that time. I credit it to her cooking but, like most of my excuses with her, it doesn’t get its wings flapping until it is shot down.

I like the fact that the apostle does not merely refer to eating meat or drinking wine as things to trip over and sprawl headlong on the turf. If he had stopped with those two a whole lot of folk would have considered they were justified, even if the whole yard was filled with brethren who fell over some of our actions. But Paul knew the tendency of men like ourselves to make excuses for what we wanted to do. So he injected the term “anything” and cut us off at the pass. This means that when we want to do anything we are obligated to look, not at the thing we want to do, but at the brother who may be capsized by it. If he will be caught in a snare because of it, we had better not do it.

Eating meat provides temporary satisfaction. It crosses the tastebuds and leaves a momentary tingle of pleasure before it is swallowed and passes into the stomach to be broken down by the

gastric juices. The resultant waste passes into the discard and is discharged from the body. There is nothing in the pleasure derived from the digestive system which can begin to compare with the reception of a brother. Meat is dead. It is headed for the garbage. But a brother is alive. He may be saved to bloom eternally in the Garden of God.

Wine is the work of man. The grape which originally provides it was the work of God. It was made for use by man. But man must pluck the fruit, squeeze and mature it to make wine. A brother is the work of God. He is a part of the family of God. We should never destroy that family in order to indulge our craving for a beverage or for food which can only give momentary gratification to our senses. If we will cease to pamper our senses at the expense of the spiritual we will all be better off and the kingdom of God will prosper.

Conscience and Faith

Ensign 10 (November 1986): 187

Ensign

The two final verses of Romans 14 provide a rare example for ignorance or dishonesty in interpretation of God's Word by would-be expositors. I weighed those accusations carefully before I committed them to print. Nothing else would have approximated the truth. Candor demanded that we face the issue fairly and squarely. The danger of ignoring the context and arbitrarily selecting a proof text is seen in the usage made of these verses to vanquish opponents more ignorant than the expositor. And as it has often been pointed out, "A text without its context is a mere pretext."

"Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God." The faith mentioned here is the private conscience or inner conviction dealt with throughout the entire chapter. It is not the faith that saves. That faith must be proclaimed. This faith is personal. It is the faith that is related to the eating of meats, observing of days, drinking of wine or a hundred and one other things about which brethren differ. One is not to announce it continually to the discomfort of brethren. God knows the sentiments of the heart.

It is as if the apostle were saying, "Keep still about it." The alternative is that if it causes others to be aroused or upset, or if it turns the assembly topsy-turvy, out with it. But that is the resort of the weakling. The man of strength has control over his feelings. He does not need to declare everything he thinks, or

make legal tender of all his inmost thoughts. He values what he believes but he knows that He is whom he believes is vastly greater. We will be happy if we escape self-condemnation in what we allow. It is easy for Satan to find a loophole. There is no use of him condemning us if he can get us to condemn ourselves by word or action.

May I use a common illustration from our history to demonstrate how a great many preachers butcher the meaning of the Word in their anxiety to make a point and win an argument. Let me refer to the use of instrumental music used in the ascription of public praise to God, for example. If one doubts the propriety of eating meats, and is persuaded by another to eat anyhow, he is condemned for eating. In our modern vernacular “condemned” is a better word than “damned” which has taken on other connotations. If one has no doubt about his eating, if he is fully persuaded (verse 5) he may eat without censure. The idea is that he must obtain consent of his conscience or personal convictions. So important is this, that even if a thing is right in itself, one must have the consent of his conscience to do it acceptably. The conscience is, as George Washington put it, “a little spark of celestial fire.” It must always be kept burning.

“Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” What ever one does with a huge question mark is a sin to that individual. But that which he does, believing it is right and justifiable, may not be a sin. It is here that the debater who is a quibbler is often tripped up. Because the word “faith” is used, he immediately assumes that all faith is the same, so he heads for Romans 10:17, “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” He affirms that it is a sin to use the instrument because the word of God is silent on the subject. He ignores the many things he does which the word of God also ignores. He places these in the category of “necessary inference.” But the word of God does not say anything about necessary inference either. One may conclude, from the use made of it, that it is an inference necessary to win an argument.

“The word of God” in Romans 10:17 is not the doctrine which is the subject of teaching as long as the person lives. That strengthens or undergirds faith. But faith comes by the gospel which is proclaimed. One cannot believe in one of whom he has never heard (Rom. 10:14). So proclaimers have been sent forth as witnesses to provide testimony of Jesus, for faith is the belief of testimony. They proclaim “the gospel of peace,” the gospel which is reported, and which Isaiah lamented was generally ignored.

Actually, a more correct translation is “the word of Christ” instead of “the word of God.” The entire chapter is a context of faith aroused by the proclamation of “the glad tidings” (verse 15). The New English Version translates it, “We conclude that faith is awakened by the message, and the message that awakens it comes through the word of Christ.” Just as long as men confuse the gospel of Christ by which we are born again, with the apostolic doctrine upon which we feed and grow, that long will they add to religious confusion and turmoil, and upset the minds and disturb the hearts of the uninformed.

My advice to those who laugh and sneer at the difference between preaching and teaching, and between gospel and doctrine, is to restrain your giggles. When you later learn the truth, and come to appreciate what the Bible really teaches, nothing is quite so upsetting and disconcerting as to have to swallow your own ill-advised criticism and sarcasm. I know!

That which one does in spite of the doubts engendered by his own inward thoughts is a sin to him. He cannot do it with personal faith in his own actions and conduct. Faith is greater than anything we say or do. If you are not sure, do not do it! God will honor your integrity but may condemn your rashness. Permit me to quote once more from the New English Bible, “A man who has doubts is guilty if he eats, because his action does not arise from his conviction, and anything which does not arise from conviction is sin.”

This places the burden for preserving the peace of the congregation squarely where it belongs, upon the strongest individual. When division among the saints is the result it frequently reflects the fact that it is the strong who have failed. “Those of us who have a robust conscience must accept as our own burden the tender scruples of weaker men, and not consider ourselves.” This presents a way which taxes the best among us. To consider and make allowance for the weak, and to neglect our own ideas, is a hard way to go. But the Christian walk was never guaranteed to be an easy one.

J. B. Phillips, who did not believe there was such a thing as “timeless English,” and who went back to “the comparatively workaday Greek of the New Testament documents,” has this interesting translation of Romans 15:1. “We who have strong faith ought to shoulder the burden of the doubts and qualms of others and not just to go our own sweet way.” I like that, just as I like his translation of 14:12, “It is to God alone we have to answer for our actions.”

The Two Covenants

Ensign 11 (December 1986): 203

Ensign

I find myself a little reluctant to write on the theme I shall now address. A number of brethren, some of whom are spiritually nearsighted, will surely begin to predict that I am leaving the faith. Yet, by ardent examination of my heart, I find myself more fully dedicated to Jesus than I have ever been. When I first began to preach, as a mere lad, I felt that the Christian life was one of conforming to a set of divinely-given rules. You either obeyed these, or you did not. If you did you were “faithful.” If you did not we withdrew fellowship from you. You were regarded as a heathen and a publican.

I felt that Jesus nailed one law to the cross, and handed another one down to the Apostles. I looked upon their writings as a written code. I did not recognize them as love letters as I do now. So, in my zeal I would brow-beat the brethren into subjection to my interpretation and understanding. It was an egotistic joy to hear them say that I was one preacher who laid the axe to the root of the trees and told it like it was. The sad thing is they did not know what it was. Neither did I. Not recognizing that we were as sectarian in spirit as others, I belabored those individuals who were reared in another “faith” unmercifully. I confused “faith” with “system” and did not realize that they were believers in the same Lord as myself. Sometimes they were even stronger.

In those days my idea of unity was that everyone would have to come to us. So I proclaimed “the truth” about all of the issues and uncompromisingly took my stand. It has only been in recent years that I could understand why no one wanted to join us. While the Reformed, and Evangelical, and Puritan Christian Churches were uniting, we were still dividing— over such momentous and world-shaking ideas as fermented wine, individual cups and the right to have Sunday schools. Others could not see the use of abandoning their freedom to stick their heads in a vise operated by someone else.

What was our basic problem? I have long been convinced that in any governmental disorder which may arise there is one prime weakness. Of course, there are many others which are subsidiary. Men hack and chisel away at them. If they got rid of all of them the principal one still exists. And the eventual result will be a recurrence of the same error. On the other hand, an understanding of the basic wrong and its removal will generally guarantee the correction of the lesser evils. We must determine what philosophy we hold which is contrary to the will of God and abandon it. Otherwise we will perpetuate it in every congregation we are permitted to plant. And such congregations will be like a baby born with a malignancy at the time of its delivery.

Now, after years of study, weeks of meditation, and days of observance, I believe that our problem lies in the fact that we have turned the one body into a people bound by laws, who tend to observe them many times, through fear rather than love. We regard the Apostolic letters as a system of rules and regulations, to be proclaimed as “divine law.” But everyone knows that the Constitution is not the law of the land. It is the interpretation of the Courts which is the law. And the Supreme Court is the final step in our appeal. All law must be interpreted and adjudicated.

Under the law given by Moses, the high priest was the interpreter. He had the Urim and Thummim to assist him. These

words mean “Lights and Perfections.” When a case was presented to the high priest he looked into his breastplate, which was like a large pouch carried upon his chest. It contained these two stones. Immediately he has light on what had transpired and perfect judgment as to his decision. Who wears the Urim and Thummim of today? Do college presidents? Do outstanding proclaimers? Do aspiring elders?

All of us know of cases where some of these have thrown their weight around “and tried to dictate beyond their scope of attention.” But the lowliest disciple has as much right as any of them to go to the Book and find the will of God for himself. No one has the right to appoint pope, prelate or preacher as the official interpreter of God’s word. Why? Simply because we are not under law but under grace. But, will we not have as many interpretations as there are members of the body? That is very unlikely, but suppose we do. We are “all one in Christ.” We “love one another with pure hearts fervently.” We “endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit.”

I come now to a matter which I feel obligated to introduce. Forgive me for writing about it. Most of my readers will be attached to what we have come to refer to as “the restoration movement.” Actually it is “a restoration movement.” It was one of sixteen such movements sparked by the Second Great Awakening and kindred ideals. Ours was the result of English-speaking individuals. The others generally were not. That is the reason we are attached to ours. The “pillar and support” of it was “The Declaration and Address.” It was written by Thomas Campbell. It is one of the most outstanding uninspired documents ever produced. You will note the use of the term uninspired. The fact that it was makes it liable to criticism.

And there is one point where I feel such criticism is justified. In Proposition 4 of the Address, Mr. Campbell writes, “The New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline and government of the New Testament Church, and as

perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was for the worship, discipline and government of the Old Testament Church, and the particular duties of its members.”

With all the respect I have for Mr. Campbell, and it is great, I beg leave to challenge that statement. I believe that, in spite of his great allegiance to the Word, he slipped a cog. In order to have an economy based upon law, it is essential that the law exist first. It is foundational. It should be read to all the people. They must know the law to which they are subscribing. In the case of Israel, for instance, it is said, “And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.”

In the case of the new covenant, it was written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God. It was not written on tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart. It is not a compilation of the letter, but of the Spirit. The letter kills, while the Spirit gives life. In his Calvinistic upbringing, and Mr. Campbell said he expected to remain a Calvinist all his life, he emphasized the written word. And there are a great many Calvinists today who cannot distinguish between the Word and the Spirit. “The Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

The new covenant scriptures were written as circumstances demanded. They contain admonitions, corrections and encouragement. They also contain thanks for favors given, rebukes for sins committed, and reproof for those contemplated. But they also contain lists of brothers and sisters who “labored in the Lord.” You will find in them a prescription for digestive problems, a request to drop by and pick up an overcoat, and an appeal to bring some books, and the parchments upon which to write more. There was an exhortation to come before winter. This is not characteristic of a constitution of law with its

“whereases.”

The new covenant scriptures were written over a period of many decades. Many of the saints never saw one of the books. None of them saw all of them. When the time came to gather them into a volume, there were grave disputes and many arguments over which ones should be included in the canon. It is a good thing that there was no one present to argue “verbal inspiration” or there would have been “no peace in the valley.” There were plenty of other things to argue about and to divide over, such as the nature of Christ.

I am now the same age as Alexander Campbell was when he died. I love to read about his life. And I thrill at the way he faced death. And I am resolved to follow “the living oracles” as nearly as I can, not as a book of law, but as a guideline of life. To me, it is like the white line along the highway showing where safety lies. But I never, forget that “I am manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ” (2 Corinthians 3:3).

The Final Word

Ensign 1 (January 1987): 3

Ensign

It is appropriate that the title borne by the last book of the Bible is “The Revelation.” This is the nearest English equivalent to apokalupsis, the Greek term used by the Spirit. Our Roman Catholic friends allowed the original to go untranslated. The last book in the Bible they use is called “The Apocalypse.” Perhaps they labored under the impression that there was no English term with sufficient scope to do justice to the majestic term. A little careful meditation would have disabused their minds.

Originally the term meant “to draw aside a curtain.” It refers to the time when curtains were used to conceal objects from view. Our forefathers, who lived nomadic lives, used hangings of camels hair or wool to partition rooms and to conceal things from public gaze. It was the pulling back of such a curtain which revealed what had previously been hidden. With the passage of time the word was translated “to lay bare, to make naked.” A good example of this last is found in Leviticus 18, where it is repeatedly translated “uncover the nakedness” in the Authorized Version.

The word appears but once in the book which bears it as a title. It is the second word. It introduces what is to follow. It is the last message recorded by one of the twelve apostles. The rest were dead, having suffered martyrdom in various places where they were proclaiming the message of grace and peace. Only

John survived and the idea that he would live until Jesus returned was circulated about (John 21:23). The visions described were seen on the isle called Patmos. To this lonely spot John was banished under the Roman emperor Domitian, where his immediate needs were taken care of by messengers dispatched by the seven congregations on the mainland. It was to these messengers the various letters were addressed.

Domitian was emperor at the time. He was the youngest son of Vespasian who began the siege against Jerusalem, and later started to erect the Flavian Amphitheater, known to us as the Colosseum. Domitian became emperor in 81 A. D. , and his reign was characterized by cruelty, second only to that inflicted by Nero. He eventually declared himself divine and looked upon Jesus as a usurper. His humanity was proven when his wife Domitia discovered her name with that of two of his generals on a secret death list. She immediately began to plan his assassination which was carried out by his own servants. He was denied a public funeral for which the Roman emperors were famous.

It is observable that John wrote in a time of political stress and intrigue. This no doubt colored the religious stream and may have accounted for some of the things in his letter. Coupled with that was the moral degradation which seeped down from the profligate courts. We can never be free from these three streams which flow together as we write. One wonders what future historians will say about the times in which we write these things. Certainly we cannot wholly divorce ourselves from the ever-changing complexion of history as we write.

The first sentence of "The Revelation" brings home to the careful reader the number of personages involved. In this we learn that God, Jesus Christ, angels, men and an apostle were all participants. Realizing that this is the culmination of God's disclosure to men, it does not seem strange to us that all of these are mentioned. The purpose of the revelation was also declared.

It was. to show his servants things to come, things which would shortly come to pass.

No man knows the future except as God reveals it unto him. There are those, even in our day of enlightenment, who claim to be able to outline history before it happens. Every year the newspapers publish forecasts of the future. These are claimed to be successful according to the percentage of items which are guessed correctly. They are valuable only because they point out the futility of those who make the predictions. I have very serious doubts that since the death of the last apostle, God has revealed His will by other revelations. I say this, despite the pronouncement of modern television “prophets” who have an appeal primarily for those of a frothy and irresponsible nature.

But “the Revelation” which originated with God, was committed to His Son, and transmitted by the angel, was of a different nature. It was sent and signified to John. The word should be sign-i-fied. It means to show by signs. The book is full of horses, dragons, trumpets, rainbows and locusts. All of these are representative of some characteristic. They must be interpreted, and the application made. This, of course, gives leeway for absurd speculation and we need not be surprised or upset when we encounter it. It was not transcribed to cause the saints to weep (5:5) but to promote joy.

John affixes his name to the book (verse 1). This is contrary to his gospel record, which nowhere bears his name. Instead he refers to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” I doubt that this implies that the other disciples were not loved. Jesus said that He loved them as the Father loved him (John 15:9). They were exhorted to continue in His love. But a teacher is naturally attracted toward those pupils who seem more readily and thoroughly to grasp the gist of what she says. And John, sets an example for us all, by his understanding that love is elemental and basic to kingdom matters.

It is affirmed in the second verse that John was faithful in his recording of these things— what God said, what Jesus did, and what he saw. We should expect to find all of these in their proper settings as we read the book. Surely this will make for a challenging volume. And the book has been one of the greatest challenges for expositors of the sacred writings. I well remember when I was a lad and we would come to the book of Jude. It was announced that we would start back with the first chapter of Matthew. Since growing up I have found that some of our ideas about Matthew were also a little off target.

The third verse promises a three-fold blessing upon those who read, hear, and keep the things written in the letter. That provides an incentive for studying its contents. J. B. Phillips translates the word for blessed by the word “happy.” This makes an interesting observation. “Happy is the man who reads it for himself, the man who hears someone else read it, and happy is the one who pays attention to the message.” In the light of this trio of promises it is peculiar that so many in our day know so little of the content of this astonishing book. Even worse is the observation of no small number that “God did not expect us to get anything out of it.”

If it was true in John’s day that one reason for studying it was “the time is at hand,” the passing of time since ought to add additional motivation for familiarizing ourselves with its content. And the fact that the final chapter pronounces a blessing upon him who keeps the sayings of the prophecy of this book should drive us to an investigation of what we can grasp from it! I love its gracious promises, its comforting assurance, and its life-giving qualities.

The Final Writer

Ensign 2 (February 1987): 23

Ensign

John was the last apostle to survive. One after another they had faced death. They did not fear them which kill the body. They knew they were not able to kill the soul. Paul had been gone thirty years, decapitated by the sword at Nero's command. John remained to put the capsheaf on the word spoken to men. He writes in Revelation 1:4 to the seven churches of Asia Minor. And he begins with the salutation which has become so familiar.

Grace was the greeting of the Greeks. When two of them met in the way they nodded to each other and said "Charis." Translated into English, that is Grace. In our day, because of the tenth historical emphasis upon gifts of the Spirit, we have become familiar with it through the use, or misuse, of the term charismatic. In the days of John, it was like the "Dear" with which we begin our letters.

Peace was the greeting of the Jews. Even to this day when they meet or part, one hears "Shalom." It refers to the tranquility which envelops one as a gift of God. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I to you" (John 14:27). John says that such undeserved kindness and unmeasured harmony are from the one who was, who is, and who is to come. God fills up the past and present, and will fill the future. He is eternal, which means without beginning or end. The word eternal occurs first in Deuteronomy 33:27 in the

farewell speech of Moses. “The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” It occurs only twice more in the old covenant scriptures, both times in Isaiah. It is not found in Revelation.

The seven Spirits are next mentioned. We are informed in Ephesians 4:4 that there is “one Spirit.” But among the ancient Greeks a man was designated as an individual in his various functions, relationships and services. He might be Mr. Brown, husband, father, friend, citizen, plumber, etc. The number seven, which always indicates completeness, can serve to identify the Spirit in his various functions: creation, incarnation, revelation, transformation, inspiration, confirmation, incorporation.

John rises to the sublime when he speaks of Jesus Christ, the anointed Savior. He refers to three points of identity, and three things He has done for us. All are calculated to win our profound admiration for Him. He is a faithful witness. Such a witness testifies to facts. And he does it regardless of circumstance. The word witness is from *martus*, our word martyr. It is well to recall that Biblically one is not a martyr because he was killed, but he is killed because he was a martyr. We are told to be faithful unto death, not until death. Jesus was both.

He is the first begotten of the dead. The Greek word is *prototokos*. It does not mean Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead. He raised several during his earthly sojourn. But he was the first to be conceived in the womb of death to be discharged to die no more. Just as one does not enter his mother’s womb a second time, so Jesus did not enter death again. All that were raised before Him had to die again, but Paul said at Antioch, “As concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption” (Acts 13:34).

The prince of the kings of the earth. The word for prince is

archon. It means chief. An archbishop is the chief bishop. The word prince literally means highest. It is found in the word “principal.” Jesus rules over the kings of the earth. He is “far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion” (Eph. 1:21). An analysis of those terms will reveal the sublimity of his greatness.

It is affirmed that he loved us, washed us from our sins, and made us a kingdom of priests. The detergent that he used to wash us from our sins was his blood. It is the only known substance in the world which has the power and penetration to dissolve and remove sin. And nothing demonstrates the majesty of his love more than the purging of sin from the garment of life. All of us are indebted to the great heavenly laundromat for doing what we were powerless to do.

And he has made us a kingdom of priests. This was the ideal of God. He wanted to make of Israel a holy nation and a royal priesthood (Ex. 19:5, 6). But they failed him. They could not listen when God spoke to them. At Sinai they trembled and stood afar off. They asked Moses to speak to them, but not God (Ex. 20:19). So God made them a nation with priests. Eventually these became corrupt. When Jesus died he arose to create a kingdom of priests. The fundamental error of Rome lies in the fact that she has re-instituted the previous regime. No greater mistake has ever been made. And that also relates to those Protestant parties which have come so near to instituting a special clergy which operates in a priestly fashion. To this day one encounters those who feel as if they can “confess” to a preacher, their sins will be forgiven. Frequently, the preacher needs to make confession of his derelictions. We are a kingdom composed of priests.

I am enthralled by the way John writes. This former fisherman had to be directed by some power above and beyond the human. When he ascribes “glory and dominion for ever and ever” to Jesus one can sense the awe and deference which is

transmitted to his pen. And the “Amen” which he affixes to the narrative means “So let it be.” Glory is from *doxa*. It is found in the doxology. The same ascription made by John is found in 2 Timothy 4:18, Hebrews 13:21, 1 Peter 5:11, etc. It must have been the accepted form for ending an epistle or closing out a section. “Dominion” is the word for ruling power. It is *kratos*. It occurs in democracy, autocracy, plutocracy, and other forms of government.

John affirms that “he comes with clouds.” When he left the summit of the Mount of Olives a cloud received him out of sight of the apostles. John was there. He saw him leave many years before. He testifies that every eye shall see him. This makes some of the patchwork theology of the Jehovah’s witnesses look as silly as it is. How people can fall for claptrap explanations hurriedly drummed up to cover error will always be a problem for my understanding. When Jesus did not show up in 1915 as specifically promised by the Jehovah’s witnesses, it would have seemed better to “throw in the prophetic towel,” than to try and patch the roof by saying he came but we could not see him. I kind of like the way John says “Even so” and adds another “Amen” to it!

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The word alphabet is formed from the first and second letters Alpha and Beta. But Alpha and Omega are not by themselves true representatives of the eternal Lord. They mark the boundaries but he is everything between them. Just as there is nothing which can be portrayed by leaving Jesus out of life, so there is nothing which can be spelled by ignoring the alphabet. We sing a chorus, “He is everything to me.” He is the whole alphabet—Alpha and Omega, and all that is in between.

And the Lord is called the Almighty. The original is *pantokrator*. The Hebrew equivalent is *shaddai*. *Panta* is the word for all or universal. *Krator* is the word for power, strength or might. God used the title first in Genesis 17:1. It was upon the

occasion when he changed the name of Abram and his wife. Job employed it more frequently than all the rest of the Bible together. John is second in the number of times it is used in Revelation. In Chapter 1:8 it is employed by God and it affirms the divine power which fills all of the cycles of time, past, present and future. What greatness, what majesty, what divine grace is involved.

The Final Addressees

Ensign 3 (March 1987): 48

Ensign

As John prepares to write to the congregation in Asia, he describes himself and his relationship. He is “your brother” which indicates a common spiritual paternity. This does not indicate that he agrees with all whom he addresses, but it implies that they are all children of one Father. He is a “companion in tribulation.” Literally, the word companion is from *com*, together, and *panis*, bread. It meant those who broke bread together. In the days of John this was a close association. One did not share food with another whom he did not know. There were no Burger Chefs or McDonalds.

Tribulation is from *tribulum*, a threshing instrument. Just as the flail separated the chaff from the grain, so trial and suffering accomplishes the same purpose, as Christ told Peter (Luke 22:31). And John was not free from bodily suffering. But he realized that he was in the kingdom with them, and this enabled him to endure with bravery and fortitude whatever was heaped upon him.

The place of writing was Patmos, to which he no doubt had been banished by order of the emperor. It is described as a sterile island, about thirty miles in circumference. It is in the Aegean Sea and is one of the Sporades. It is forty-five miles west of Miletus. Modern parties are shown a cavelike indentation in the hill called “St. John’s Grotto.” It is purported to be the place

where the beloved apostle saw the Lord, and viewed the remarkable scenes which he described in such a fantastic manner. It also looked out across the blue expanse toward the mainland where were situated the congregations which had meant so much to John.

John's faithfulness to the word of God had resulted in his banishment. Fleeing Jerusalem in the interval between the sieges of Vespasian and Titus, he had gone to Ephesus. Here he was subjected to idolatry in its worst form. But John never failed to cry out that there was one God, and that the temple of Diana had been erected to honor vain imagination. Because his testimony of Jesus was so plain, pointed and powerful, the authorities banished him to this obscure and forsaken island where his words would not be heard by human ears. God thwarted this inglorious attempt to silence him. He revealed to him this marvelous book which has had a profound effect upon the world of mankind.

We learn from verse 10 that the imagery of the book began on the Lord's Day. This is the first recorded usage of the term. In a certain sense every day is the Lord's. He alone can control it and order the events which compose it. But in another way the first day of the week belongs uniquely to the Lord. It was on that day He arose from the dead and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." It is the day we commemorate with the feast of remembrance. And it is the day when the Spirit operated effectively to gather the ecclesia for the first time. It was the birthday of that noblest of events.

And John was in the Spirit on that day. What is meant by that expression may challenge our thinking and explanation while on earth. It certainly means more than that John had the Spirit in him, for that was true every day of the week. But in some special way, on this day John knew that he was under the direct influence and prompting of the Spirit. He was lifted out of the mundane surroundings in which he existed and exalted to

the very gates of heaven itself. Before his wondrous gaze enrolled the great panoramic sheet of history. He fell on his face as if he were dead (1:17). He was told to fear not, but to write. And so, we have this marvelous volume as part of the Spirit's prompting.

One thing is certain. God is in control, and as has been so often remarked, "History is but the recounting of his story." The skeptic, Ernest Renan said it would be impossible to tear Christ out of history's total fabric without rending the whole structure apart. It is not surprising, then, that Revelation begins and ends with Jesus. John declares that he heard behind him a great voice. This could prove quite startling for one who thought himself alone with the only sound, the chirping of birds. Like the sound of a trumpet the voice declared that the speaker was Alpha and Omega, and commissioned the writing of a scroll to be addressed to the seven churches of Asia.

These were not the only communities of believers in Asia. We know of Colosse and Hierapolis. It has often been speculated that the seven were chosen because they represented every state or condition into which the communities of saints could find themselves. Many think that the order of addressing them held significance and books have been written to show that the body on earth has passed through these stages one by one. We should be a little wary of dogmatism in our explanations in the absence of direct instruction from the Spirit. Of one thing we can be certain. In every age God smiles upon faithfulness and frowns upon unfaithfulness.

On one thing we can be certain. The tides of history sweeping over the world have had their effect on these assemblies of believers. They no longer exist. The lampstands have been removed. The cities are now generally in ruins. They belong to Turkey. The boasted numbers, the wealth of yesterday are no more. And one is made to wonder if strongholds of the faith in the United States of America will go the same way. Will

the passing of years and of decades cause the disappearance from earth of once strong concentrations of believers?

When John heard the voice upon the lonely isle, he instinctively turned around to see the speaker. And, having turned, he was amazed to see seven golden lampstands. The King James Version was translated after England had developed candles from wax or tallow. So the translators use the word “candlesticks.” But, in John’s day such things had not yet been invented, and lamps were used, with a twisted wick thrust down in oil and the lamp placed upon a lampstand so that its flickering flame might light a greater space (Mat. 5:15).

We are informed in verse 20 that each of these lampstands represented one of the communities of believers. Each of these is intended to support the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). A lampstand does not give light. It simply supports the flame. It would be a great help if most congregations would bear this in mind. It would put an end to a great deal of bragging about the wrong things. The lampstands were represented as golden because of their preciousness to God. Gold has always been the standard for measuring the value of other, and less valuable metals. It will help to recall that God positions the lampstands and he can remove them at will (2:5).

It is reassuring that John saw Jesus in the midst of the golden lampstands. He is still there. Unfortunately, we have sectarianized the lampstands in our day until it would present a problem for anyone but the Son of man. However, it is comforting that He said there is one body. Fortunately, He knows where it is and who composes it. It is regrettable that we do not always recognize it. That is why we move around so much, every time some of the brethren learn something new.

Jesus was dressed in high priestly garments when John saw him. He had on a long robe, reaching down to his feet. He was wearing a golden girdle about the breasts. This reminds us

of the theme of the Hebrew letter. “We have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.” Made a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, “he can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.” He was tempted in all points as we are, and was without sin.

What a blessing it is that in the days of Domitian he was in the midst of the communities of light. And he still is. Nothing that has happened in the long and bloody history of man has driven him from his place. And nothing will do so. Those who have not defiled their garments will still walk with him in white. Those who are faithful unto death will still receive a crown of life. “He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” Sons of God! What a privilege. What a joy divine!

The Final Appearance

Ensign 4 (April 1987): 63

Ensign

John deserves a place among the outstanding writers of the world. Told to describe what he saw, he does so in language which is not adorned. There is a question whether he knew and understood the deeper meanings of what he wrote. That is left for us to surmise, and that there is some far-out guessing is evident by things which are seriously suggested by some in our day who claim to have discovered the key by which to unravel the mystery.

When John heard the trumpet-like voice behind him he swung around to observe the speaker. When he did this he was treated to the last authentic sight of the Lord. There have been people in every century since who have claimed to see him but they operate from grotesque imagination. Some day every eye shall see him! Until that time it is a little risky to make absurd and unproven declarations.

Jesus was dressed in a high-priestly garment when he appeared on Patmos. His purity was indicated by his hair which was as white as snow. His eyes were penetrating, as a flame of fire. Solomon declares that “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good” (Prov. 15:3). Hanani, the seer, declares, “The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth” (2 Chron. 16:9). The feet of Jesus were like bronze, perhaps symbolizing the power by which he would tread

down the nations.

His voice, when he spoke, reminded John of the sound of many waters. The clear, liquid tones impressed the apostle as he listened to him speak. He observed his right hand and saw in it seven sparkling stars, and he saw proceeding from his mouth a sharp two-edged sword. I find that especially interesting. John saw the same phenomenon in Revelation 19:15. And the writer of Hebrews (in Chapter 4, Verse 12) identifies the word of God as “sharper than a two-edged sword.” The sword represents the spoken word. The fact that it is two-edged means, as the old preacher said, “It cuts ‘em comin’ and goin’.”

When John saw Jesus his face shone like the sun at its meridian. One indication of the glory of God is the radiance or luminosity which is present. And it is small wonder that John was smitten by the vision and fell at his feet as if dead. He laid his right hand upon John. That was the hand that held the seven stars. As he did so, he told John not to give way to fear. He declared again that he was the first and the last. At his word the heavens and earth came into existence. At his word they will pass away with a great noise.

He is alive now, but once he was dead. John knew about that death. He heard Jesus say about Mary, “Behold thy mother!” From that hour he took her unto his own home. He had been present when Jesus yielded up his spirit. He saw him die. Now he saw him alive. And he heard him say he was alive for evermore. The cruelty of the soldiers was gone. The intense suffering was past. The agony was over. The second death had no power over him.

He declared that he held the keys of hell and of death. Hell is *hades*. It actually means “not seen, invisible.” Death is *tharatos*. It refers to one from whom the spirit has fled. Keys are symbols of authority. One who possesses them has the power to lock and unlock. The keys held by the jailer signify his right of

access to the prison cells. Our Lord holds the authority over the realm of the dead as well as over the living. Death really holds no grim terror over one who truly believes in Jesus.

Once more John is commissioned to write historically, presently and prophetically. He is to record what has happened, what is happening, and what will happen in the future. This meant the employment of memorization, observation and inspiration. We are indebted to him for a glimpse of the unrolling of the scroll of God's design. And we are thrilled that the prophecy of this book was not to be sealed. We have access to its content through God's divine grace and love.

The final verse in our division of chapter one speaks of "the mystery" of the stars and lampstands. The word *musterion* conveys a slightly different idea than the word mystery, as we use it. To us it means generally that which is hidden and is unknown. Sometimes it actually conveys the idea of something not capable of human understanding or wisdom. But, in the Bible it refers to that which has been previously hidden but is now revealed. It is what is known only to the initiated.

Jesus declares unto us the mystery of the seven stars. He initiates us into their meaning. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches. The word angel means "a messenger, an agent." It is regrettable that many inevitably think of a heavenly or purely spiritual being when they see the word. It need not be so at all. Surely the congregation where John had labored so diligently would not abandon the aged apostle or forsake him to his fate. Rome made no provision for feeding those who were banished. And we can conceive of the congregation designating faithful men to visit John in his extremity.

The letters were addressed to these messengers. It was they who were charged with reading them to the congregations and they were blessed in so doing. It is significant that they were in the right hand of the Lord. This is indicative of their value and

the regard in which they were held. Just as Jesus has been elevated to the right hand of the Father, so these were assigned to this place of authority and prominence.

The seven lampstands, in the midst of which Jesus stood, represent the congregations of believers. They held up the light in their respective communities. There is no light in a lampstand. The lamp provides the light. An ancient writer said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet." Congregations are not meant to be places of amusement. They are to be bearers of the word of God. It is possible for the candlestick to be removed if they fail. How tragic to see a community once brilliantly lighted, which has become cold and dark, because its candlestick has been removed.

As we near the conclusion of the introduction to this remarkable book, we find ourselves driven by an almost uncontrollable urge to know more about it. It is my sincere hope that you may have received some inspiration from what we have said to mine deeper into the wonderful deposit of lore which God has deposited in it. The riches to be rescued and brought up from its depths can be secured from no other source available to man. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

It was more than sixty-seven years ago that I was sitting one night in a little rural meetinghouse in Illinois. We were studying a lesson from the Bible. It was being taught by an uneducated farmer. All of those present were sons and daughters of the soil. When the lesson was finished the congregation stood and sang "Blessed are they who do his commandments, they shall claim the tree of life." I was impelled by an inner urge to leave my seat and to stand before my neighbors as an eleven year old lad, and confess my belief that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." It caused a lot of joy among the angels in Heaven. I have never regretted it. I still

believe it with all my heart.

Let It Come

Ensign 7 (August 1987): 123

Ensign

For quite some time I have been arguing that the world is ready for another reformatory movement. I do not grow discouraged by its lack. I am absolutely certain that, if God agrees, He will arrange it. We will lift up our eyes some day and there it will be. I am laughed at in many places. I am called an empty dreamer. That does not perturb me in the least. It is the common fate of all visionaries who share the dream. The fact that many of them died for it did not alter their expectations. It did not change their belief in its coming.

Centuries roll by while God is preparing to act decisively. But one can sense what will happen by the feel in the air. We are urged to update the reformations of yesterday— the ones of Luther, Hus and Zwingli. We cannot do that. These have already become sectarian. I say that reluctantly. They all deny it. But not one of them has its capital city in heaven. They are all of the earth. So it is with every denomination you can name. All of them fear making some man— or men— angry with something said or done without permission.

The sect to which I devoted so much of my energy, power and strength to build in the past is no different. Its vaunted boasts have all come crashing down. True, around each small segment there gather a few men who still make a pretence of “conquering the world.” They are whistling in the dark. They

are sitting in the edge of a worldly cemetery counting the wraiths of yesterday, the ghosts of the past. They know it is all over.

It has been this way before. It was so when Martin Luther began. Read the history of those days and wonder. It was that way in the early part of the nineteenth century. The American Revolution had just been fought. The Constitution had just been approved. The French Revolution had just culminated. And it was the poor, uncultured and uneducated Methodist circuit-riders who went on horseback through the jungles and over the prairies, who saved America.

Then, at Cane Ridge in Kentucky, and Washington in Pennsylvania, as well as several other places, God showed His hand. To prove it was God who did it something unique took place. The two movements united at Lexington, Kentucky. Nothing like that had ever happened. New hope was given to hundreds. The Declaration and Address written by Thomas Campbell was printed and read by thousands. It was never practiced by any of them and has not been to this day, one hundred seventy-eight years later. It still exists as one of the greatest human documents pleading for the unity of believers in Christ Jesus.

Now it appears that God is getting ready for another breakthrough on the human level. All of the signs point unflinchingly to its coming. I am charged to look about me and see what is happening. The signs of the primitive ekklesia are everywhere apparent I am told. From the jungles of South America to the large offices in cities men are being baptized in the Spirit and are speaking in tongues as at Jerusalem where it all started. Please pardon me. I have no desire to be a "kill joy." But there is a great, a subtle and a solemn difference.

The present outbreak is the tenth since Pentecost recorded by history. Everyone of them was just alike. They all require an

interpreter. The outbreak at Jerusalem on Pentecost was different. "Every man heard them speak in his own tongue in which he was born." Those who claim the gift today when they go into a different culture, have to attend school and learn the language of the land. I do not propose to argue with or to censure them at all. I am simply saying that they do not represent the vanguard of God at all.

Tongues had no part to play in the work of Luther, Hus or Zwingli. They had no significance in the labors of those Presbyterians—the Campbells. And I do not expect them to play a part in the coming world-wide Movement in the future. But, by the other side I am made aware of conditions existing. Humanism, sexual license, homosexuality and abortions are thriving in our day. But I sincerely hope that no one thinks these things, and a hundred others, are too much for God. He may favor just such a time to make manifest his power and might. The fire from heaven which destroyed Sodom was God's answer to homosexuality. Perhaps the conflagration of heaven may kindle a couple of our worst cities.

We can freely admit that sectarianism is in trouble in our day. Look at the Roman Catholic Church, the mother of sects. In spite of a genial earthly head who can still command an audience of a half million people, there is talk of dividing the church into one or more of liberals and traditionalists. No church of purely ethnic origin can remain large enough to embrace all of the believers. The very mission efforts formerly done by the Jesuits may prove the undoing of the Roman community.

The Lutheran, Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist parties are all in serious trouble. Several have parted. Those who have severed relations regard the others as their worst enemies. The religious groups are all in a great mess right now. They need a divine hand to take hold of them and lead them beside the still waters. Actually, if there were genuine non-sectarian believers in the Church today they could wield a profound influence. But the

problem is that each one who could lead assumes a controversial attitude and insists upon arguing it to the detriment of all others concerned.

There are unquestionably persons in every religious sect who earnestly seek to follow our precious Lord. They need to be motivated, encouraged and genuinely assisted to find others of the same thinking. Frequently those who search them out have a sectarian basis in doing so and do them more injury than rendering help. If men, gentle and kind, could infiltrate other religious bodies and become acquainted with the members, talk with them, share with them, and associate with them, they could do more for promotion of oneness than a half dozen screaming evangelists could do.

The time is drawing near for a new reformation. It must begin with the hearts of men. It must be projected with genuine love. It will be augmented by men who are more interested in the cause than in personal gain. Let us move forward to gather up the sincere and consecrated ones. They need not be asked to join anything. They may be better off not doing so. It is joining organizations, many with the best intentions, which has produced all of the narrow sects which war against one another. Forgive us, dear Lord. Let men be free!

Through Recovery

Ensign 8 (September 1987): 143

Ensign

Ever since I can remember there has been an ardent dispute over certain terms used to designate the nature of the movement promoted by some Christians. I once enjoyed it just as I did every other fuss that we could get going. But the world around me has changed. I did likewise when I learned that people, in general, were not overwhelmingly intrigued by our squabbles with one another. There were a lot of “empty saddles in the old corral.”

We used to argue fairly bitterly over whether there was a real basic difference between reformation and restoration. We made it out to be so. Then, in the past thirty-five years the term “renewal” has crept in. That added a third element. As I see it now, the term Restoration Movement was applied to those who were trying to do the same thing as were those in the Reformation. It is generally conceded that this last was primarily the work of the associates with Luther. The other was primarily pushed by those with Alexander Campbell, as we saw it. Mr. Campbell was a great admirer of Luther. He regarded himself as furthering the work which Luther had begun. We read over that and emphasized the points of difference. A lot of them developed because of the time which has passed. They were not matters of difference at all, but of growth.

Reform is defined as to make better by removing abuses. It

comes from *re*, again, and *formare*, to form. Restore is to bring back to a former or original condition, to put back in a former place or position. It is from *re*, again, and *staurare*, to make firm. Actually there is no real difference. A thing restored is one reformed. The argument was a contrived one. It was a squabble over more words. And there is no more useless feud in which one may engage. It satisfied only those who wanted to fight.

The term renew is new. Fortunately there has not been sufficient time to involve it in mental gymnastics. That remains for the next generation. I like the term. It literally means “to restore to a former or sound condition.” There is no question but what the faith has been manhandled by the many who have carelessly dealt with it. Sectarianism has treated it quite unkindly. Humanism has directly attacked it. It demands that we not only defend that part of it that we still have, but that we work to preserve it as it was in the beginning.

May I inject a word or two about slick salesmen who peddle the word? One of the more recent is Jim Bakker. He coupled immorality with his announcement of the hyperglossed message. Of course he took in incredible sums. His rather simple-minded wife exploited the religious angle for personal gain and power. Eventually it all came out. They had received help regularly from people who were on pensions. But they built up a tremendous backlog of houses, boats and money for themselves. Of course it all amounted to people sending without investigating.

We seem to forget that the gospel, when it becomes an article of commerce, is subject to the same rules which govern other such items as are offered for sale. The first thing to do is to examine it scrupulously to be sure that it is the good news of Jesus. Nothing else will save a person. Nothing else will bring one into a genuine relationship which will produce and sustain life. Jesus said, “The words which I speak unto you are spirit and life.”

Crooked preaching builds a warped community. And a warped community needs renewal. We must determine what it was like. And we must determine what it was not like. Much has changed around us. But the hearts of men have not changed. Many are filled with deceit and malignity. For every person mentioned in the new covenant scriptures your mind reverts to his counterpart in your own life and experience. And the word must be rescued from them. The community must be renewed.

Such renewal must take place, not because of the community's need, but because of our own. It has been promised that the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Ideally, it will stand in the presence of its Creator. But that does not mean that wherever one finds a vacillating group of individuals carrying on that God will be pleased. The community is composed not simply of a group of individuals, but of persons whose hearts and lives are right. Right lives are produced by right doctrine. And that is sound teaching.

Thus, the proper place to start renewal is with what is taught. I think the community can be renewed by recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. As I look at those three words my heart beats faster. Renewal through recovery? There is no other way. A weakening or neglect of any of these three means a lopsided community. A proper recovery of all three means a thriving growing group of believers, imperfect individually, but perfected as one.

I notice that there are those who seek renewal, but it is so unstructured and informally done it eventually ends up in everyone doing his own thing. How fortunate we are to have the apostle Paul as an example. Although reared after the strictest manner of the Jews, and despite being a Pharisee, he was able to receive Gentiles into the faith and to welcome them. Perhaps his having been born and reared outside of Palestine had something to do with it. At Antioch he withstood Peter to the face because he was influenced to make a difference when the Jews came to

Jerusalem. We learn the art of consistency from this and how important it is.

Paul points out that “the doctrine of the cross is sheer folly to those on their way to ruin, but to us who are on the way to salvation it is the power of God.” We need to learn what it means to be on the way to salvation. All of us need that cross which is the power of God. We do not need a doctrine which is sheer folly. The doctrine of the cross must be restored as the power—the real energizing power of God.

This means that much of the preaching in special meetings is a total loss when it comes to the power of salvation. I actually heard the president of a school for three nights and the cross was not even mentioned. One night the subject was instrumental music, one night it was on moral problems, and the third it was on politics. Not one word was uttered about the power of God. The audience was left to go it alone, powerless and with only desire. Is it any wonder that I saw several of them catching up on their sleep? Is it a surprise that only two teen-agers were present for three nights. Young people are seeking the power to overcome.

May I suggest that the next reformation will consist of a renewal of the cross. It will be again “In this sign, conquer.” Everything else will be placed in proper position. Men will no longer look at college degrees as a triumph. They will see them for what they are—the triumph of one man’s mind over circumstances. The things men see will be the shame, the brutality, the ignoring of the cross. Men will gather to it. It will become the rallying standard, the utter hope of suffering, bleeding, dying humanity. Lord, hasten the day!

The Proclamation

Ensign 9 (October 1987): 163

Ensign

The word “proclamation” occurs only twice in the new covenant scriptures. It is found more times in the previous revelation. Jesus makes good use of it in Luke 12:3. It is compared with the cry or announcement of a herald. In those days there was no radio or television set over which to make announcements. Victory or defeat in battle was proclaimed by a herald. The old covenant scriptures frequently speak of proclaiming a fast.

Every town had an official who was elected to serve as the crier of news. Frequently he had a place elevated above the plain, upon which he stood and made official announcements. Sometimes he went through the streets ringing a bell to get attention, and following with an announcement. It is no wonder the apostles were hailed as heralds. They announced news—good news—to the world. In the Anglo-Saxon world it was called “gospel.” None of us can announce the gospel to the world. It has already been announced. “Their voice has sounded all over the earth, and their words to the bounds of the inhabited world” (Rom. 10:18).

We can re-announce it. We can re-proclaim it. We must recognize that as our task. We are not original heralds. We are secondary. The community of believers is constructed upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. It was by a revelation

that His secret was made known to Paul. Through it he could understand the secret of Christ. In former generations this was not disclosed to the human race. Now it has been revealed by inspiration to His dedicated apostles and prophets. Through the Gospel the Gentiles are joint heirs with the Jews. They are part of the same body. They are sharers together in the promise made in Christ Jesus. This is the Gospel. We can tell individual Gentiles that they are included.

The world of which we are a part is no longer, generally, divided between Jew and Gentile as antagonists. It is true that there are pockets of animosity, but none as serious as there once was. There are different areas of prejudice in our day. But the good news is all-embracing. It touches red and white, black and yellow. No longer is it a question of revelation or naturalism. God is coming into His own, but that must become known. It must be re-proclaimed.

This does not mean there are no areas of friction on earth. There are many such. The police and students of South Korea, the military threat of the Persian Gulf, the problem of Russia and the rest of the world, the conflict between Iran and Irak—all of these are desolating. But the world is getting better. Mankind is growing up. The circulation of the good news, despite the cultism and sectism, the greed and exploitation, is having its effect. We are heading toward renewal of the Christian faith and, when it comes, we will all be much better off.

Every reformatory movement has been cast in a time of disillusionment. None has had clear sailing. There is no indication that the next will be any different. There will be opposition. But there will be one great source of difference. It will be the Oriental and African influence. In previous reforms there was a general ignoring of the Far Eastern influence. It was not to be counted within the realm of Christian influence. That is rapidly changing. The largest community of believers on earth is

in South Korea. The great surplus of Christians in mainland China is powerful.

In my earlier days travel was quite restricted. In our village you went only where you could walk. You got there late and left early. If you were fortunate you made it to the county seat once per year. About all you could do was to stare with open mouth at the courthouse. In these days common people are going to Hawaii, China, Japan, and Africa. There is a general exchange of items for the home. But there is something else— an exchange of ideas. It is impossible to think that there will be no power of the presence of the Gospel. There is. The good news is being announced in areas which were closed a few years ago.

The Gospel is simply the age-old story of what God did for man who was lost, lingering and lonely. Suicide was rife in the Roman empire. In the midst of a world caught up in the intricacies of trade, the unholy intimacies of the flesh and the inhumanity to the human family, the good news was echoed forth. It was irresistible. The Herods and the Caesars faded from the scene. They left only the measure of their contact with the Christians. The Good News climbed mountains, jumped rivers, spanned oceans and took its place in the learning centers of the world.

When Paul came he resolved that while he was with them he would think of nothing but Jesus Christ— Christ nailed to the cross. The Gospel he proclaimed did not sway the Corinthians with subtle arguments. It carried conviction by spiritual power. Their faith was not built upon human wisdom but upon the power of God. It is that Gospel, that proclamation we must seek today. It is not the pampering of wealth, an appeal to scholastic ability or a call to human pride. It is the simple, down-to-earth good news. This can be told to most anyone— and by most anyone on earth.

I recall the first time I heard it. I must have been about

four years old. It appealed to me then. It still appeals to me now. At first, in the little mining town where we lived there was no place “dedicated” to telling the message. So we told it in the woods where we met. It was dedicated to the great outdoors. Hardy miners heard it and accepted it. They quit their drinking and womanizing. The saloon-keepers were our worst enemies. They should have been.

My uncle and father, uneducated, began to read every spare moment. They began to tell the message to men on the street, to those with whom they labored, or to neighbors before darkness descended over the earth. They gathered about 25 persons whom they immersed in a pool they had made in Flat River. Then, instead of meeting in homes and allowing each one to talk, they bought a saloon for a minor sum, sawed it in two, and moved it to a site next to my uncle’s home. For two years people met there. Then they began to move. There was not a sufficient number to keep the place going. As the “leaders” moved away it gradually stopped the meetings. Eventually it was sold to the Baptist people, who were more sectarian than we had become.

I have often thought about it. As I recall I hated to move into the building. My motives were not what they are now. Seventy-six years makes a difference. But I can recall thinking what a blessing it would have been for each family in those simple times to have set the table of the Lord. They could have made it available to those who could not have had it. Several places in the village could have come together to partake of it. Not all would have had to meet at the same time. They could have edified each other and spread the Good News to unsaved neighbors.

It is amazing how things come about. Twenty years ago there was a sudden departure of Catholic priests from their church. Many were alcoholics. Many more wanted the comfort and consolation of a wife and children. About 30 or 40 house

groups sprung up. You will recall that I interviewed them. Most of them had the Lord's Supper at home. They had grown tired of the Mass. Several of them told me they would never return to the institution. Many said, "The Lord's way is best. Why exchange it for something else." Those are good questions for all of us.

Purport and Purpose

Ensign 10 (November 1987): 183

Ensign

The July, 1987 issue of Reader's Digest has a condensed book called "Against All Hope." It is the story of Armando Vallares. It contains his prison memoirs. He spent 22 years in a Cuban gulag. He entered when he was 23 years old. His book shows the resilience of the human spirit. When his captors had taken everything they could touch, he wrote, "I still have my smile, the proud sense that I am a free man, and an eternally flowering garden in my soul."

To one who knows about the apostle Paul, Cuba seems like Rome. Fidel Castro seems like Nero. But Paul would not have written "Against All Hope." He knew the source of it. And he never dreamed of abandoning it. I have often wondered what Paul would do if he were alive in the United States today. I've also wondered what the United States would do with Paul. I would like to be as he would be. What would he say about abortion? About divorce? About stealing and graft?

Would he be predicting the coming of renewal through recovery? Could he read the signs of the times? Could he interpret them? What would he write in an epistle to Chicago? Or Boston? Or San Francisco? We will never know. But one thing we can affirm. He would never forget his purpose in the world. It was his life. It was the reason for being. It was directly connected with his purport. That is an interesting word. The last

syllable has to do with the work of a porter. It relates to carry. The word means literally “to carry out.” It means “to carry about.” And Paul never forgot that he was God’s porter. He bore the message of salvation to men. That was his purpose. And “hope sprang eternal in the human breast.”

I am quite convinced that we face another reformation. It will not merely affect a few of our sects or parties. It may end up by wiping them all off the earth. It may not be limited to one portion of the earth. It will affect Korea, Burma, China, and Russia. It will also affect the United States. It will also relate to the purpose. The truth must be preached. It must be propounded with the proper purpose. The right objective counts!

Paul’s method was illustrated when he wrote to Timothy, “I adjure you by His coming appearance and His reign, proclaim the message, press it home on all occasions, convenient or inconvenient, use argument, reproof, and appeal” (2 Tim. 4:1, 2). In the chapter previous he shows that proclamation is not enough. He says, “But you have followed my teaching, my conduct and my purpose in life, you have observed my faith, my patience, my love, my endurance, my persecutions, and my sufferings.” In the great seven-hilled capitol of the world, in the beautiful Athens, in the banking city of Pergamos, or the medical center of Thyatira, Paul pressed his message home.

He proclaimed it with purpose! What would he do in modern Saint Louis? Would he be written up in the Post-Dispatch? Called a religious zealot? Blasted as an interfering babbler? Arrested? Thrown in jail? With whom would he become close friends? The mayor? The aldermen? The Blacks? The Whites? The rich? The poor? Would he choose to live among his fellow-Jews in the richest part of town? Or with the homeless who walk the street all night, talking to themselves?

If he came in a few years later he would find conditions a

lot better. There's a great day coming! I do not refer to the invention of faster planes, or more accurate missiles. I'm talking about matters that pertain to the soul. Things of which we have robbed our inner consciousness. God will again show that this world's wisdom is foolishness. There will be those who want miracles for proof. There will be those who look for wisdom. But as for us, we will proclaim the crucified Christ. He is both the power and the wisdom of God.

Men have been led to proclaim other things. They have relied for divine strength upon something else. They have lifted their eyes to the stars and have bowed their heads in adoration of them. But they have rejected the Star of Jacob and the Sun of righteousness. What a blessing it will be to humanity when they once again begin to direct their search toward Him who is the source of the only real power the world has ever beheld. Man has directed his efforts toward uncovering the source of destructive power in the universe. All of the power and wisdom have been invested in that. But the real source of spiritual strength has been neglected.

Yet, it is not too much to admit that the ability to win wars by destroying men's bodies is not equal to rescuing them from death to serve the living and true God. It will readily be admitted that at least two things are essential— the proclamation of His will and the proper aim or motivation. Not only must the good news be proclaimed but it must be sent forth with the purpose for which it was intended. Otherwise, it will deflect from acceptance of it. An obedience which reflects from improper motives is one which will end in disaster.

The hearts of men cry out for God. Those who deny His existence verbally, are glad to be proven wrong in their assumption. Years ago, while a mere lad in grade school I read a book. It was not on the list of recommended readings, but I found it fascinating. The title of it was "Dying Testimonies of Saints and Sinners." It contained the final words by both. Some

of the saints were being tortured to death. They spoke their true sentiments at the stake while burning to death. Not a one denied the existence of God. The sinners were crying out to Him whom the saints were thanking.

In the book were the final words of some of the reformers. Not a one would have ordered his life differently. All were glad they had died while leading men to God. Such joy! The day is coming when multiplied thousands will be proclaiming the truth in words designed for this age. Millions will hear it and give credence to it. It will be the song of children and the subject of their fathers and mothers. God still reigns over the earth. He will subdue and bring it into subjection. The grain will be gathered, the ripened fruit will be plucked. None will be wasted.

Jesus said, “Do not start worrying, Where will my food come from? or my drink? or my clothes? Your Father in heaven knows that you need all these things. Instead, be concerned above everything else with the Kingdom of God, and with what He requires of you” (Mat. 6:31-33).

Do you believe in prayer? I mean “really believe in it”? I urge you to start to pray for the consolidation of God’s design. It is coming. It will come with or without our prayers. But with the children of God beseeching for it, asking and pleading for it, it may come sooner than expected. let us entreat God to hurry it along. Some of us will not be here to see it unless it comes soon. And let us have purpose for wanting it— God’s purpose. Bless His holy name!

The Power of God

Ensign 11 (December 1987): 203

Ensign

There are certain eras when the Christian world suffers great reverses. One such time began about 525 A.D. Justinian was emperor. Theodora was his bride. Constantinople was the capital. In 528 A.D. Antioch of Syria suffered a severe earthquake. There were 4,870 who died. The next year it was Laodicea where more than 7,500 perished. The following year it was Amasea and Myra. In 530 A.D. there were extensive droughts and many earthquakes.

In 535 A.D. there ensued a riot in Constantinople. It raged for several days in the Hippodrome. The town was set afire. More than 30,000 men met death in the wild scramble. The great Church of the Holy Wisdom of God (Saint Sophia) was reduced to rubble. Justinian was resolved to rebuild it. He would make it the crowning achievement of his career. It would become the meeting point of this world and the transcendent world in which God's purpose was unfolded. It was to be a gateway from the unknown to the unknowable.

Accordingly, he rejected the master builders. Brought in were Antithemius of Tralles, and Isidore of Miletus. These men were engineers and mathematicians. As they spread marble around, eventually Justinian was taken in to see it. He saw space spreading into space. Breathless, with the splendor of it, he whispered, "Solomon, I have surpassed thee." And he had. Yet,

candor forces us to point out certain things about the two temples.

They were planned, designed and built by men. The material which went into them was gathered, shaped and erected by men. They are for time. And time takes its toll. Nothing that man has erected will stand. It will all come apart. It will be eaten by insects, consumed by fire or devastated by war. It will not stand. It cannot continue. So Solomon's temple went down under three attacks by Nebuchadnezzar. And the sagging, broken marble of St. Sophia is a grave warning of what will happen to that constructed by man.

It is not so with the body of Christ, the fold of God, the temple of heaven, the bride of God's beloved Son. Jesus tells us that He will "be with us always, to the end of time." He informed us that the gates of hell could not prevail against the planted community. God has laid a foundation. It stands firm, with this inscription: "The Lord knows his own." The day is coming when He will separate the righteous from the wicked. It will be like a shepherd dividing his sheep from the goats. The sheep will be invited to inherit a kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

This does not mean that God abandons the community until the final day. As time passes on restorations, reformations, improvements, and alterations, all take place under divine direction. It is about time for another. Men tend to corrupt those which have taken place. They sectarianize them. They have to be purged. The one to come will be in the nature of renewal. It will be brought about by recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose and power. We have spoken of the first two. let us deal with the last.

In 1 Corinthians Paul speaks of power. He tells us from what it is derived. He gives the source of it. He relates it to the cross. "The doctrine of the cross is sheer folly to those on their

way to ruin, but to those who are on the way to salvation it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). The cross is not two sticks of wood nailed across each other. It is not a crucifix on an edifice. It is not a little metal cross worn about the neck. There is no power in any of these.

It is Christ nailed to the cross. Taken by the cruelty of man, shoved, pushed, beaten, slapped— but willing to bear the cross as far toward the place of execution as possible— it is that. It was not what the Jews sought. It was not what the Greeks sought. For “the Jews call for miracles, and Greeks look for wisdom.” “But we proclaim Christ— yes, Christ nailed to the cross.” The Jews and others still seek for miracles. When none are available they invent them. The Greeks still seek for wisdom. Look at all of the great schools of the world. Many of these deny the fact of Jesus’ death. But “Christ nailed to the cross” is the greatest fact in the world. In some respects it is the only fact!

The Christian way was adapted to the slaves of the world. These were regarded as nothing by the world. They were merely work animals. When one could no longer work he was discarded like a worn-out piece of machinery. He was literally thrown among the broken pieces of implements no longer usable and left to die. When such men heard the good news it meant something to them. God chose things low and contemptible, mere nothings, to overthrow the existing order. So there is no place for human pride in the presence of God.

Paul states, “The word I spoke, the gospel I proclaimed, did not sway you with subtle arguments, it earned conviction by spiritual power, so that your faith might be built not upon human wisdom but upon the power of God” (1 Cor. 2:5). There is a difference between human wisdom and the power of God. And there is also a divergency between spiritual power and subtle arguments. Many preachers have not realized this. That is why they are frequently found engaged in fruitless and futile arguments.

Paul was faced with a decision when he came into southern Greece. Should he follow the noted orators of the day and indulge in words of empty sound, devoid of power? Or, should he proclaim, in all of its ragged and rugged adherence to fact, Christ nailed to the cross? Without hesitancy he declared the gruesome details of the world's treatment of Jesus. The Spirit explores everything, even the depths of God's own nature. It is the power of God. And in the ultimate deed of man was revealed not only the utter extreme of God's grace, but the manifestation of a power so tremendous as to be world-shaking.

That power has been eroded. It has been sacrificed. It has been forfeited. In any God-given attempt at renewal it must be re-established. It must invest the purpose. It must give life to the proclamation. It cannot be used to make human pride register. It dare not be employed for a demonstration of human ability. It is the divinely-appointed power which operates through the gospel—the preaching of the cross to them that perish!

Slowly, but with increasing speed, we are traveling toward the encounter of the greatest fact of history with all else we have known. That fact will reveal once and for all the tremendous power of the cross. It was here that God and man met. It is here they must meet again. False systems will be seen as false, the wild ruses of men will crumble and fall, the vain imaginations and the cruel idols of men will perish. And as we now face the fog and doubt of the uncertain future we can only say, "Hasten the day, Lord, hasten the day!"

My Maternal Grandparents

Ensign 8 (September 1988): 151

Ensign

I came into the world as the representative of a mixed heritage. It is a wonder I ever got it straightened out. Take my grandfather's family for instance. He was a Dane. As a mere child he had been a shepherd among the hills of Denmark. For a little while he served as a stevedore at the docks. But always there was in the back of his mind the thought of coming to America. Eventually the time came. The family had to pack its own food for the crossing. No boat in those days served the passengers. They came by what was called steerage. It was a frightful journey.

On the way over his younger brother developed pneumonia. There was no doctor aboard the vessel. Despite the loving care of the parents the little lad died. Burial had to take place on the ocean and soon. The captain ordered that the body be sewn in a sail. As the sun was going down the passengers gathered on the upper deck. The captain read a brief Scripture and as he finished two sailors lifted the little burden and let it slip into the water.

My grandmother was from Scheswig, Holstein, a province in Germany. She was proud of her birthright and refused to betray it by learning a single word of English. This presented some problems when a group of grandchildren visited her who did not "sprechen sie Deutsch." They married and purchased a

farm with a little house. As the children came, it became smaller and smaller. Eventually, it became sort of a hanging place for clothing made from home-crafted materials. Every door bore its burden. There were no closets and very little furniture.

There was a fireplace in the living-room. In winter it gave heat to warm the place where grandfather sat to read the newspapers, many weeks old, which came from Denmark. Despite their age he read them assiduously. They were weeks old when he got them. Grandmother had never learned to read. It was scoffed at as a useless thing for girls in those primitive times. She kept house, which she was trained to do. The house was not much as we count dwellings today.

There was no such thing as screens. In the summer when doors and windows stood open the flies were a real problem. One person had to stand with a long tree limb, waving it across the table so the rest of them could eat. To “mind the flies” was a three times a day job. It was enhanced when grandfather opened the keg of sardines which he imported from Denmark every year. Rats and mice were also pestiferous nuisances. They ran over the kitchen floor while people were eating. They also ran over the people when they went to bed at night!

There were no lamps in those days for the abjectly poor. Grandmother poured grease in a saucer and twisted a rag and put it in the grease, leaving a part of it to hang out. This was lighted and provided a meager light. When crops had been taken care of and there were only chores to which to attend, company came quite frequently. They did not stay long. Bedtime was early. So was “getting up” time. But the neighborhood was enlivened by young people. There was nothing to go to, so sitting on the front porch became the thing to do.

The German Kaiser presented a grave problem to my grandparents. They listened astutely to everything which indicated that the war was coming near. When it was finally

launched, and the boys were summoned to it, one of theirs, Frederick, had to go. "Uncle Fritz" was one of the best men who ever lived. He was a bit reticent because of a speech defect, but he was always the first to help when there was a need. He had hitched up his team and taken people all over. He never came back. After having gone through the strife of several battles he was able to hear that the war was over. He was at the railway station near Paris waiting for the train to start the homeward journey. He saw an elderly lady picking up small chunks of coal on the tracks. He left his place and went to help her. A train ran over him and killed him. He was buried somewhere in France. In the weeks following notice of this event I saw my grandfather drunk for the first time. My brother and I, who were very small were asked to go to town with him. We were awakened at 4:30 a.m. and found the mules already hitched. We started out, and it was while we were on the street that so many sympathized with grandfather and offered to buy him a drink that he got too many. Fortunately the mules knew every step of the seven miles.

Grandfather and his family were all confirmed Lutherans. There were two churches in his town— one Catholic, the other Lutheran. Both of them ran their own parochial schools. There was no public school. Grandfather was just as anti-Catholic as he was pro-Lutheran. He was convinced that God had raised up Martin Luther to do exactly as he had done. He regarded the Lutheran Church as being a replica of the one which Jesus established and he could see no use for another in the world. All of his children were christened in it and several had stayed with it quite firmly. That gave him much pleasure.

When his daughter, Annie, had gone some 80 miles from home to visit her sister whose husband was a miner, she met the young man who later became my father. She spoke only broken English at the time. All of her education had been in German schools. Why they became attracted to each other I will never know. He asked her to marry him. She said she would have to get permission from her father. To her father he was a heathen.

He wrote him a letter in which he said that he would grant permission for her to marry since she was of age, but it would be given only upon his solemn promise never to ask her to change her faith and provided that all of the children would be christened and reared as Lutherans.

When my mother was baptized into Christ after I was, she received the last letter from her father. It notified her that since she had left the faith, she would no longer appear in his will and he did not care to see her again. He died shortly afterwards and she was not notified. She spent weeks grieving over the letter, and I became convinced of what the sectarian spirit can do. It affected me but not enough to cause me to give up my sectarianism at the time.

Now years have gone by. I am much older than my grandfather and grandmother when they breathed their last. I am profoundly glad they believed in Christ. I am sorry they got wrapped up in a sect. But coming from the land they did it was either that, or nothing. I am thrilled that in their homeland they made the choice they did. I am resolved no longer to judge them. If I did so it would be in the partisan spirit they manifested. I made my choice as I had to do. They did the same!

Will they be lost forever? Only the God of the universe knows. It is in His hands and not in mine. I shall allow Him to do the judging. He will announce the final decree in the end. It will be just, righteous and ultimate. Rather than stand over their graves and speculate as to their final fate, I had better be serving Him and doing his will. Certainly a great deal more is required of me than of them. But part of my ability to respond more fully is directly traceable to them and their sacrifice.

I do not say what you should do! If you are inclined to condemn and to assign to prison those who differ, regardless of circumstances, then you will do so. I simply say that I am not inclined to sit in judgment upon these poor victims of

circumstances. God knows all about everything. I do not! It seems to me to be a logical persuasion for me to allow Him to do the judging and make the final decision even while I pursue the field of righteous endeavor. There are too many ifs, ands, and buts, about any decision I would make. God did not provide me with infallibility. Thank you, Lord!

My Paternal Grandparents

Ensign 9 (October 1988): 165

Ensign

Thomas Ketcherside was the name of a relatively poor Scotsman who came to this country right after the Revolutionary War was ended. He settled in South Carolina. All of us who wear the name in the United States are descended from him. Some are prominent, some are not. Some became doctors. Some went in for politics. Some became preachers, one became a priest. Ketchersides followed Daniel Boone into Kentucky crossing through the Cumberland Gap. They were uneducated and illiterate.

The ones that I descended from settled in the Ozarks. It was an opportune time for people who could not read or write. The railroads were beginning to creep westward. Thousands of ties were needed. The third highest mountain of the Missouri Ozarks is Ketcherside. It was named because of the ties that were hauled up it by oxen driven by a number of the Ketcherside clan. When the Cherokee migration began from Georgia to Oklahoma territory the “Trail of Tears” went through the vicinity of this mountain.

My great, great-grandfather left my grandmother, who was from Scotland, and began living with an Indian woman. There is no indication they were ever married. After that, according to the custom of the times, grandmother lived among the relatives until she died. My own grandfather married a

“bound girl” when she was fifteen. He saw her working for her “board and keep” and found out she had been bound to a master until she was eighteen. He talked to her, and finally went and paid off the rest of her time and they were married.

They moved to the other side of Bonne Terre, which at the time was being mined by the French. The name means “good dirt” and it proved to be just that. Their family was born one by one, and frequently the birth was unattended by a doctor or midwife. Grandmother herself was a midwife and when not too pregnant to go, was hauled all over the mountains on the back of a horse to give attendance to some of the women whose time of delivery had come.

Neither she nor grandfather could read a word. All of their lives they had to make an (X) for a signature. But they possessed learning which precedes that which is alphabetized. The Civil War was just drawing to an end. They lived in direct proximity to the Hildebrand home. The soldiers came one night looking for “bushwhackers,” men who lived in the woods. Finding none they gave Mrs. Hildebrand ten minutes to leave. She set off across the field carrying her Bible in her arms. They set the house aflame. Her son became a noted bushwhacker and frequently lived in a cave just off grandfather’s place.

As the children grew up they went to Coonville School. It was a long walk. School was held only when a teacher was present. The teachers were itinerants who would come and teach a month or so, and take what they received and go on. For one thing, the boys went to school until they were 21 or 22 years old. Their boast was that no teacher could stand the gaff. They dared a teacher and made life so miserable he had to go.

My father went to the third reader. There were no grades. A child finished a reader and started the next. Frequently he had to submit to questions to prove that he had actually read the material. Portions of it had to be read publicly before the school.

All ate together from their lunch pails at noon. In the evening the teacher went home with the one he would stay with that night.

Religious exercises were about as sporadic and casual. A man would come riding up on his horse and say he wanted to preach three nights. One of the boys would be started out on a mule to tell the general public. Frequently, because it was a blessing to go anywhere the crowd would be especially large. Occasionally, the meeting broke up in a fight.

The study of the Bible was a farce. Men read it with superstitious blinders over ears and heart. Religion was a matter of vain exercises. When one arose in the morning he looked in the Bible and the first thing he saw was looked upon as God's will for the day. Sometimes a passage demanded quite a bit of doctoring before it would be made to mean anything definite. The Baptists were the most energetic of the preachers.

My uncle made a profession in the Baptist faith. He was a quite voluble talker and applied for a license to preach. He was told to study the Bible intently for three months and then be examined by three men appointed to the task. He sat for his examination one day and proved to be much more alert than the preachers who were questioning him. When he had finished they told him that he sounded much more like a "Sand-Hiller" than a Baptist. They refused to give him a license.

The "Sand-Hillers" were people from near Mine La Motte, Missouri. This was a French settlement to the south. It was over a rich deposit of lead ore. Some of those who lived in the vicinity had come to the conclusion that sectarianism was a sin. They had renounced it. They mostly lived out in the sand hills from which they took their name. Uncle L. E. (as he was universally known) began to investigate and found a group of them meeting in Flat River. He went among them and sought to join them.

It created a furore which almost divided the congregation. Several demanded that he be baptized. He insisted that he had been baptized once. They called it "Baptist baptism." L. E. declared that it was not so to him. Regardless of what the Baptist people taught he knew why he was baptized. It was simply because of the will of Christ. When it appeared that it would divide the group he agreed to be baptized again. He said that the first time he was baptized it was to obey Christ, the second time was to obey the Church of Christ.

He was no slacker. No sooner was he baptized than he began to think of his neighbors. Cantwell, where we all lived, was a little town inhabited by miners. They were generally quite ignorant. Many of them could not read or write. No books came to their homes. No newspapers or magazines were delivered to them. Day after day they lived in their own little world. They knew nothing about the other states or cities. A very few had been to Saint Louis. It was the end of the earth to their neighbors. Many of them lived and died in ignorance of the finer things of life.

L. E. invited them to come to his house and bring their chairs. There were no folding chairs. They brought their dining chairs. Mostly they brought powder boxes. These were large boxes in which explosives were prepared for use in the mines. Some of them leaned against the fence and listened. L. E. brought out a lamp from the house. It often flickered in the wind. Sometimes it went out and had to be lighted again. As best he could, he told them from the Bible what the Lord said and how he talked to the multitudes.

But there was one family he did not reach— mine! My father thought he was mentally unbalanced. He was not one to believe in a book admittedly hundreds of years old. And he would not admit that uncle L. E. was a preacher. We lived less than a block down the street of dust. And generally we stayed at home. But not everyone did. We could look up the street and see

people gathering and visiting before the lesson began.

Although I was a little lad, once in awhile I would gain permission to go up ahead of time and play. But not often! My parents were quite strict. I was not allowed to go outside our fence very often. There was nothing to run over me but a cow, but I was continually warned of the dangers outside the gate. L. E. continued night after night. He was without competition. There were no shows, no musicals, no restaurants. There was only one saloon!

My Father's Family

Ensign 10 (November 1988): 185

Ensign

As I grow older, and tend to live in the past, in contrast with the present and future, I find myself thinking of the house in which I was born and started growing up. Like most homes of early miners it was small. There were two rooms. In the front room was the heating stove and two beds. There was a wire stretched across one corner on which we placed our clothing. The other room was our kitchen and dining room. Because it became too hot to eat in it in the summer we had a “summer kitchen” behind the house. This was a large building made of upright planks. It provided not only a place to eat in summer but also a place for storage of anything and everything which needed storing.

On one side of us lived a woman and her two daughters. Her husband had been sentenced to prison. He had shot a man to death in a fight and was given a long term. There was no financial help for the family, no food-stamps, or assistance. They were sort of banished from society because of a crime for which they were innocent. On the other side lived a “bad woman” with her father. She entertained many men during each week, more on payday than any other.

Directly in front of us was a huge “sink hole.” It had been made many years before I was born. One day the ground gave away above an empty cavern and the earth slid into it. By the

time I came along the place was an inundated park. In full sight of our place and just across the sink hole stood the Star Saloon. On payday the prostitutes would gather in front of it and solicit and harangue the men who came out of the saloon. Many of the miners got their checks cashed there and came out staggering from drink. The prostitutes who were all called “chippies” in the local vernacular entertained the men behind a large stone they had selected.

As I recall women were sort of an inferior breed. My mother was naturally retiring because of her German dialect. But she cared for us with an intensity that was noteworthy. We were never out of her sight for very long. My father, who had been reared in the backwoods wilderness was of another stripe. In his ignorance of life and its demands, he spent his spare time drawing pornographic pictures. I located many of them years later in the few books he possessed and seldom bothered to read. But all of this suddenly changed.

My uncle, L. E., tried to get him to “go to church” with him. It was a little over two miles down the railroad tracks. You had to cross an extremely high railroad bridge over Flat River in order to get there. I had not been to church many times in my life. Mother had walked two miles and carried me to the Lutheran Church to have me christened when I was 29 days old. That was quite a feat when you recall that a woman who had a baby then was committed to her bed for almost two weeks. But without interest from my father I had never returned. My father contented himself with cursing his brother when he asked him to accompany him!

One evening my uncle came rather early. Father was sitting out on the front step. We children were playing in the yard. “Better come and go along with me, Bill,” were the words of my uncle. Dad thought a minute. We stopped playing and looked at him. “Wait until I get my hat,” he said. The two of them walked off together. I went dashing into the house. “Dad is

going to church with uncle L. E.," I told my mother. It was as hard for her to conceive of as it was for me.

The preacher was a backwoods type. But he was made for the occasion. His theme was "Will a man rob God?" In language such as he spoke everyday he proved that a man often robbed God of his time, of his talent and of his children. He bore down on the latter. If a man had children under his care, he should train them so they would grow up to serve the Lord. It struck Dad where he lived. I am sure he thought of me, almost five, and growing up as a first-class heathen. When uncle L. E. asked him at our gate how he liked the sermon his only reply was, "It was all right."

The next day underground, a man was setting up his drill for him. Certain miners had drills with which they bored into the rock, and tamped the hole full of powder and ran the fuse out so they could hide behind a rock and fire it. Generally they drilled seven holes and they were to count the reverberations to seven. This man, a rough miner, looked at Dad and said to him, "Bill, why don't you believe in Christ?" With the sermon still on his mind, Dad said he didn't know. It was the first time he had given a civil answer. The man sat down with him at noon and with the light of their Carbide lamps shining from their caps, they read the Bible. Dad finally resolved to give up his life to Jesus.

He was baptized the next Sunday in the company pond. It was about two miles from where he lived. I walked back with him in his wet clothing. When we got home he started disposing of his stuff. Calling in Luther Scott off the street he made him a present of his fiddle which he had played for country dances. He called in another man and gave him the gun with which he had won all the shooting matches. He threw his pipes into the stove and his tobacco over the front fence. He burnt a deck of cards which he had handled so agilely.

That evening he opened the Bible. He started at the very first page and began to read. By and by mother went to bed. He continued reading. How long he read I do not know. The next evening he called us in and assigned to us three chapters. I was already reading by the age of five, so I was called upon to read aloud. When dad came in from his shift, whatever it was, he asked us questions, and gave us another assignment. That is why by the time I was just past eleven, I had been through the Bible twice, including the big names such as Maher-shalal-hash-baz and all the rest.

I never went to Bible College or any other college. All I know I learned in God's first great school, the home, taught by teachers who had the greatest interest in you, the parents. Maybe that is why, at the age of twelve, I was preaching the word with all diligence. Things made a great change when father did. He began to preach for a little rural congregation six miles in the country. I walked out with him and back again after staying for luncheon. The people were desperately poor.

L.E. and Dad decided to have a meeting in Cantwell. They selected Daniel Sommer of Indianapolis to hold it. After it was over we set up meeting in an open grove. The Lord's table was the center of the service. Regardless of what else was done it was never slighted. The dogs came to meeting with their owner. They lay under the seats looking sleepy. Occasionally one of them would start and bring a rabbit right down during the meeting. God was good to us. As the weather became too cool for meeting outside, we retired to Grandfather's.

Everyone who came brought something for luncheon. When the service was ended Grandmother donned a checked apron. The rest of the women did likewise. The men sat out on the front porch talking. I sat on the steps listening. The theme was generally the Bible lesson for the day. Several of the men chewed tobacco. It was interesting to see them get excited and spit over the banister. When lunch was called all the men arose

and went to the table. Later the women ate. But finally came time for the children. We consumed what was left. They were great days and a wonderful time in the Lord. I'm glad to have shared them!

The Art of Reading

Ensign 11 (December 1988): 207

Ensign

Grandfather had two brothers living within two blocks of him in Cantwell. One of them, Uncle Nick, was a kind of useless individual. The other, Uncle Preston, was of slightly different attitude. He had been a buffalo hunter for soldiers engaged in “taming” the Indians. It was a great treat to a young lad like myself to go up and sit on his front porch and get him to reminiscing about the life he had led. He was captured once and spent some time in an Indian encampment. He was mustered out at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

His wife was long since dead but he lived with his daughter and her husband. Both of them were blind. They made a garden and took care of it. On Saturdays which were pay days to the miners they stood on a street corner in Flat River holding out a tin cup and singing. When someone tossed a coin into the cup, Bill took it out and bit it to see if it was real. They were Watkin’s salesmen and I had to lead them around to take orders. It was not easy. There were no sidewalks and occasionally someone would leave an impediment in the way.

I got started reading the Bible to them before I started to school. As I read neighbors would come and stand by the fence or against the porch and listen. It was a treat to them to hear someone read. I began to go every evening and read. I had to go home when it was too dark to read. They did not have a light on

the place. Uncle Preston made it a point to go to bed before dark. He was up about 4:30 in the morning.

As a result of reading for them I got several other invitations to read. One was at my grandfather's place. They would quietly sit and rock to and fro in splint bottom chairs and listen intently. It encouraged me greatly to have an audience to which I could read. Occasionally I had to explain something to them if it taxed their ability to understand. They were a real blessing to me. later on when I conducted their funeral services I paid tribute to them for their great assistance.

My mother had learned to speak broken English but had never learned to read it. Before I started to school I had read through three readers and finished two arithmetics. It presented some problems to the teacher in the two room school to which I went. Before the first year was gone I was promoted to the fourth grade. But before I started to school I taught my mother to read. She seldom read anything but the Bible. The fact is there was not much else to read. We did not take a newspaper or a magazine.

Before I was six years old I began to take orders for books. I went door to door. I sold quite a few. Occasionally someone would say, "We do not need a book, we already have one." It was a joy to my ears. I asked if I might borrow it. I read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and sat behind the heating stove and wept. But there were not a lot of books in the community. Every two weeks a wagon came bringing books from a library. I was allowed to check out four of them. In two days they were read and I had to wait two weeks to get others.

I only went two years to the little Cantwell school. It was interesting though. One afternoon we had an earthquake. It shook a few of us out of our seats, brought down the ceiling and tore up things generally. It was then we learned that we were astride the New Madrid fault. It had rumbled over the country

once before and moved the Mississippi several miles and created Reelfoot Lake. The land quivered and twisted for several days at the time of the quake.

The first world war broke out as I left Cantwell and began to walk to Desloge to school. There were a number of Hungarian children in attendance. They worshipped in an Orthodox Church that had a great "onion" on the steeple. They brought peculiar things in their lunches. I began to eat my lunch on the way to school and when lunchtime came I ate with them.

The school was all afire about the war. One day we had a Liberty Loan Drive. It was held in the auditorium. I borrowed a goat from one of the neighbors and took it to school. On his side I had a printed sign which said "Get the Kaiser's goat." Something went wrong and the goat began butting everything in his way. He butted me over the fence and I was injured.

Shortly afterwards, we moved to Marshalltown, Iowa. One of my mother's sisters and her family did the same. When I was nine years old we came down with the flu. Although we were very ill we lived because of good attention by our parents. We lived on "neck bones" for many months. But we weathered the war and I have since gone through two more. There was great and unrestrained joy when the first ended.

I was glad to be in Marshalltown for a little while because they had a library. I went by on the way home from school and spent most Saturdays there. I was soon weaned away from fiction and began to read history. May God bless Carnegie, who spent a great part of his fortune on libraries that the poor could enjoy. When someone asks me what college I attended I mention that I was too busy at the library to go to one.

Only heaven will know how much the library meant to me and later on in life as I began to proclaim messages of love and concern. I found many things recurring to mind that I could use

and which were helpful to others. Let me express my gratitude to you who have read this and may I hope that your children and grandchildren may find the same joy in reading that I have found.

The Most Abused Word

Ensign 3 (March 1989): 43

Ensign

If you were called upon to designate the most beautiful word in the English language, what would be your choice? Perhaps you would say love, or mother, or home, or heaven. Everyone of those words are truly beautiful and significant, and I'm sure that you would have much in favor of your choice, with reference to either. But suppose you were called upon to select the most abused word, the one most often misrepresented. What would you choose as your example? You may differ with me, and I'm sure that a lot of you will, but I'm going to assert that in my opinion, the most abused word in our vocabulary today is the word "Christian."

This name is a holy one. It was given by the God of heaven himself. It was first applied at Antioch to those who were disciples of or followers of the Lord Jesus himself. You are familiar with the quotation, that "the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." We learn that from Acts 11:26. Now, what did that name mean when given at that time? I know you will agree with me, that since it embodies and contains the name of Christ, that it means "Christ-like." It is therefore apparent that those who wear this title purport to pattern after the life, conduct and actions of the immaculate Savior of men. Is that the meaning the word has today?

We call this United States of America a Christian nation. Is

that really true? Can a nation be Christian when over half of its people are not members of any church or religious organization? Can this be such when of those who are members, fully a third never appear inside a church door from one year to the next? We ask God to bless us as a nation because we say that we accept Him as our Supreme Sovereign. I want to ask you a few questions. Can God bless a nation where drunkenness and riot are the order of the day? Can he bless a people who permit fornication, adultery, lust and evil of every description to thrive unchecked and unpunished?

You know as well as do I, that the divorce courts of this land are grinding unceasingly and turning out a grist of broken homes, broken lives, and broken hearts. You know that parents desert their offspring and forsake their welfare in order to accumulate a little more of the gold that glitters with a fascination that excludes the gleam of love from the eyes of their own children. You know that selfishness, sordid greed, ungodliness and immorality all stalk openly through our streets, are nurtured in the hearts of those who make up this great commonwealth, and are eating like cancers at the soul of this land of the free and home of the brave.

Can America be Christian, when there is no regard for the Bible? Thousands there are who never read it, thousands more who look upon it as a surprising superstitious piece of idolatry. Its teachings are laughed at, scoffed at and ridiculed! Its sacred precepts are trampled underfoot without qualm of conscience by those who profess to love it.

Is America Christian, when she turns the sacred Lord's Day into one of fun and frolic, of gay abandon and lighthearted living, with never a thought of worship at the table of Him who died at Golgotha, and who said, "This do in remembrance of me until I come again"? I need not tell you that Sunday is now a Funday, that it means no more to many than Tuesday or Thursday. No thought is given to it as the resurrection day of

Heaven's greatest gift to dying mankind.

Can America truly be called Christian when her people have turned from the light of life, to the lights of Hollywood? That she has forsaken the living God and turned to other gods, worshipped with all her heart, you will not question. Millions who cannot tell you the names of the 12 apostles can rattle off the names of the 12 most famous actresses. Millions who cannot name the books of the New Testament can even recall who all the wives of some of the actors were, and that seems more than the actors themselves can do. The gracious invitation of Jesus to "Come unto me," has changed into the suggestive "Come up and see me sometime" of the voluptuous portrayal, by Mae West. The churches are emptying. They can no longer have prayer meetings, for not enough will come to pay for having the janitor unlock the building. And yet we call this a Christian nation.

And worst of all it seems to me is the fact that the churches themselves have been given over to worldliness. In many instances they have become mere play houses, forums for discussion of politics, and institutions where pink teas and book reviews have supplanted the plain, old-fashioned, straight-from-the-shoulder gospel preaching. Some have even become places of glorified entertainment rather than of serious worship. They sponsor minstrel shows, fashion parades, and theatricals of all description. They have chicken suppers, pie suppers, bake sales, ice cream socials, and Tom-Thumb weddings to pay the preacher's salary. They use quilt raffles, bingo games, carnival claptrap and every other kind of gambling to cater to the worldly passions of their membership. Yet all of this is indulged in under the name of being "Christian." I ask you, if that is the kind of a church the Son of God died for on Calvary's cross?

America is not Christian as God looks at it. She has glorified hypocrisy, enthroned sin, and flattered herself that God will be fooled. But be not deceived, God is not mocked. If it is true that an individual will reap what he has sown, it is true that

a nation will do the same, for this is God's law from time immemorial. Long years ago, one who was inspired said, "Blessed is that nation whose God is the Lord." And when ancient Israel departed from the truth of heaven, the prophet declared the condemnation of God in saying, "My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewn out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water." And again, the thundering reverberation of heaven's accusation may fall upon our own ears.

It has ever been a principle of heaven that when a people become lifted up with pride that they would suffer a downfall. That is true of a person, and true of a nation. God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble. The apostle says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." Let us then ask God to help us that we stand on his truth!

God has ever been interested in the names that His people wear. You'll recall that upon some occasions he even gave to certain individuals prior to their birth, in order to assure that they would be properly designated. Generally these names as given by heaven had a distinct meaning. They signified some characteristic in or about the life of such individuals. Perhaps the first man mentioned in this way was Ishmael. His name means "Heard of God" and he was so-called because his mother's prayer was heard and answered. His half-brother, Isaac, was also given a pre-natal name by the Lord. The name itself means "Laughter" and the child was so-called due to the pleasure and joy he brought to his aged parents.

In the New Testament the angel revealed to Joseph that Mary would have a son and it was distinctly said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Certainly that name was very significant, since the word Jesus means "savior." Now, when the Lord gave his stamp of approval to the name "Christian" as a divinely authorized title for his

believers under the gospel dispensation, it was expected that they should reverence and respect that name, and wear it with honor and grace.

The word “Christ” means “anointed.” Since this is embraced in the term “Christian,” it also has reference to the anointed of God. That is the position we are to occupy today. Under the Old Testament, two classes of persons were anointed. One was the priest, the other the king. One was to serve and sacrifice; the other to rule and govern. In this age, we are not called “Christians” for nothing; rather, we are anointed kings and priests. As priests, we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices; as kings we are to rule over our desires and keep our passions in subjection. Otherwise we will prove ourselves unworthy of the high and consecrated name which has been bestowed upon us.

When a child becomes involved with the law as a result of some sin or crime, he does not suffer alone. The father whose name he bears also must endure the reproach, shame and ignominy. So it is also in a spiritual or religious sense. The church suffers for our ungodly lives. There are those who refuse to accept the truth at all, because of the base pretenders who are affiliated with the church. Everyone has heard another say, “Well, if that fellow is a Christian, then I’m just as well off out of the church, because I wouldn’t think of doing the things that he is guilty of.” I recognize that this excuse is neither sensible or valid, but nevertheless, it is not very becoming in us to make such an excuse possible. We ought to so live that no one could ever bring reproach upon the church by reason of our conduct.

The name “Christian” belongs to every day in the week. Some there are who think that you don it like you do your Sunday “go-to-meeting clothes” and take it off the same way. They believe that if you attend the services of the Lord’s Day that will give you license to do as you please the rest of the week. I deny that! I’ve said, and repeat, that if a man does not act as a

Christian the remainder of the days of the week, the chances are that he will not be one on Sunday either. Failure to recognize this salient truth, makes the word “Christian” the most abused word in the whole world.

Partners With Satan

Ensign 4 (April 1989): 72

Ensign

The Bible class teacher said to her class one Sunday morning, “Children, tell me if there is really a devil. What do you think?” For awhile there was no response, so she insisted, “All right now, who will tell me? Do you think there is a real devil?” Then little Johnny spoke up: “No,” he said, “there isn’t really a devil. It’s like Santa Claus. It’s your dad.” We are forced to admit that a lot of fathers act like the devil, but I’m sure we could hardly credit such with being Satan. Yet it is surprising how many individuals today must think that the devil is dead and buried. At least, a majority do not act as if they think Satan is a being at all.

But the Bible teaches the personal existence of this one who is responsible for the ills and woes of this world. Jesus believed that Satan existed. The Bible says, “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.” It further declares that “when the tempter came to him, he said, ‘If thou be the Son of God, command these stones to be made bread.’” Jesus answered, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” And after another temptation, Jesus said, “Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mat. 4:1, 3, 4, 10). Notice the three terms which are applied in this one case. The same being is called “the devil,” “the tempter,” and “Satan.” Thus these terms all refer to

one and the same character. Jesus spoke of and to him as an existing being.

The apostles of the New Testament, as inspired writers, did not doubt the reality or personality of Satan. Paul says, "Lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2:11). Peter says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). James says, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (Js. 4:7). John declares, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (1 John 3:8). Jude specifically affirms that Michael the archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses (Jude 9). Nothing is more clearly taught in the New Testament than the existence of Satan or the devil. And if he has died since the New Testament was written, I would like to ask who it is that is carrying on his work around here. He is doing as good a job at deceiving the world as the devil himself! We know, if we believe the Bible, that Satan does exist, and is influencing the world for his own gain and the loss of souls.

But the thing I am concerned about today is the part you may be playing in assisting the devil in his work. A lot of people are actually partners of his Satanic majesty without seemingly realizing it. I do not conceive of the devil as conjured up by medieval superstitions. He does not have a long tail with a spear on the end of it, two horns protruding from his head, a cloven-foot, and a spear in his hand. If I were to see someone like that tonight standing on the street corner, I'd break all speed records between that point and my home. And he would have to gouge me out from under the bed with that spear, for I'd be way back under it. You know that the world is not going to follow one who has such a frightening appearance. Satan doesn't operate to frighten! He wants to mislead by a soothing flattery, to seduce by clever doctrines, and to win by cavilling and insinuation.

Rather than the likeness we have mentioned, it would be

far more appropriate to say that he stands in the guise of a preacher who tells his audience that the Bible is not inspired and we are no longer bound to observe the teachings of the Lord. He appears in the form of a teacher standing before his class and instructing them that man was not made in the image of God, but instead is a mere glorified brute, the product of millions of years of “selective breeding”; the scion of a stem of higher apes.

But surprising as it may seem to you, Satan can even quote Scripture when it suits his purpose. He did that when he was tempting Christ, and the mere fact that he misapplied it or quoted it in such a way as to contradict other plain Scriptures does not in any sense legislate against the fact that the devil knows the Bible and will employ it if he can deceive. Further, he will plant his agents in the church, knowing that they can do a lot more harm to the Cause of Christ on the inside than they could on the outside. It is a fact that one liar, one drunkard, or one gambler can do ten times as much harm if he is in the church. The greatest ally the devil has today is the hypocrite—the pretender. Such a person will deceive and allure dozens of others, and bring about their downfall.

What should be the attitude of the church toward such in their membership? I’m sorry to say that in most cases they are tolerated. Perhaps an elder or leader has a son who is immoral, corrupt, despicable and ungodly in his life. He runs around with a wild, reckless, dissipated bunch of scapegraces. But all of the preachers who come to such a place are generally very careful to preach only on faith, repentance, confession and baptism. They will stay off of the things that this boy is doing, for fear that they will lose their job, or perhaps not get as big a financial rake-off as they otherwise would. I say that the elder who lets his son go unrebuked, the son who brings reproach upon the church, and the fawning preacher who will keep his mouth shut for fear, or because of the love of filthy lucre are all servants of the devil.

How different was the attitude of Paul. When he learned of

the existence of a fornicator in the church at Corinth, he wrote a letter immediately and told the church to withdraw their fellowship from the man, and I quote, “Deliver such an one unto Satan.” (1 Cor. 5:5). Why deliver him unto Satan? Simply because he belongs to Satan, and Satan’s agents have no place in the church. When you have someone in the church who is walking after the lust of the flesh, turn him over to Satan. If you hang on to him, Satan will get the whole church. Paul practiced what he preached. I read again, “Hold to faith and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck, of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme” (1 Tim. 1:19, 20).

Now I know a lot of churches which claim to be faithful to the Bible, but they will not obey this command at all. They will preach on the elementary principles of the gospel, they will fight their sectarian neighbors and show shade, grade and description among themselves. What good is it to have the right doctrine if your life doesn’t back it? Can you please God if you have a pure doctrine and a corrupt life? Of course, some of these salaried pastors don’t like to preach too hard on keeping the church clean, because a lot of times the ones who have control of the purse strings of the church are as guilty of sin and ungodliness as they can be. And you have to cater to them you know or else you’ll be out looking for another call to preach. I tell you people, it is time to quit this wire-walking, pussyfooting, carrying water on both shoulders, and compromising with the devil. Come out against sin! Condemn it! Lift up your voice! Cry aloud and spare not!

And to you who are playing politics with Satan, who are using the church and religion as a cloak of maliciousness. I suggest that you get out all together or else get in with both feet on the Lord’s side. This idea of walking spraddle-legged and sitting on the fence, will not get you anywhere, and will retard the progress of the church. Don’t be a pretender. You will not

fool God. You are only deceiving yourself.

If you have gone into partnership with the devil, break up that arrangement and dissolve that agreement at once. Let the world know that from now on you'll mean it when you say that you are a "Christian." I want you to listen to what God thinks of an unscriptural alliance. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you" (1 Cor. 6:14-17).

You have an influence. It can either be given to the service of the Son of God or to that of the devil. What are you doing with your life this day? "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Rom. 6:12, 13, 16).

Be partners with God. The apostle Paul says, "For we are workers together with him." But remember that you cannot serve with Christ and the devil at the same time. Not in vain did Jesus say, "Ye cannot serve both God and mammon." Then make your choice today! Cease to be a partner with Satan and enter into that fellowship with Jesus which will mean for you some day, the blessings of eternal life.

A Clean House

Ensign 5 (May 1989): 90

Ensign

I am going to talk today about a subject that is decidedly unpopular. It is about house cleaning. Many a man has suddenly recalled that he had an appointment elsewhere when his wife announced that the spring or fall renovation of their dwelling-place was just about to begin. Not long since, an individual who has a hard job at the brick kiln, told me that he took a vacation, thinking the change would do him good. But he said that after a week of climbing up and down a stepladder, cleaning wallpaper, painting, dusting, taking up and putting down rugs, scrubbing woodwork, sweeping and scouring, he went back to his old job, and it looked so easy to him he told the foreman never to let him ask for a vacation again as long as he lived, especially in the spring or fall.

However, the thing I'm concerned about today is "spiritual house cleaning." You know that regardless of how clean a place may be, when you women learn that a royal or society guest is coming to stay with you, the whole house has to be given a good "going-over." I want to talk about a visitor who is staying with all of you who are children of God, and see if it is not important that you keep a decent place for his dwelling, lest he desert you, and you be deprived of the inheritance which otherwise you would receive, if he continued with you until death.

The house in which this visitor dwells is your body. The

visitor is the Holy Spirit. I believe that the Spirit of God dwells in the heart of every Christian. You will too, if you believe the Bible. Let me read to you. “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). Again I read, “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8:9). Thus, I know that our earthly bodies are the dwelling place of God’s Spirit.

In view of this, it behooves us to keep ourselves clean. Since the record says we are to glorify God in our body and spirit, we must be sure to keep clean both externally and internally; both physically and spiritually. In proof of this, I wish to read for you in 2 Corinthians 7:1, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” This indicates that a man cannot perfect holiness in his life, or show the proper reverence for the Lord as long as he is guilty of retaining those things in his life which are contrary to spiritual hygiene or cleanliness. I think a lot of us need a genuine house-cleaning!

I consider that in this cleansing process, we should get rid of any habit or habits, which would tend to weaken or destroy our bodies. Not long ago, a man told me that he was having serious trouble with his home. Termites had been eating away silently and without warning at the foundation and he did not know that the structure was weakened until the entire floor gave way in one room. So it is possible for the bodily fibers of one’s body to be weakened through the years until eventually it topples into an untimely grave.

I have never contracted the tobacco habit. Sometimes there are those who ask me why I do not smoke cigarettes. There are several reasons. I do not want my son to smoke, and the best way

to keep him from it is to desist from the habit myself. I have no right to set for my son a standard which I will not set for his father. Again, I know that this habit blunts one's finer sensibilities. Think of how those who are guilty break the laws and statutes without compunction of conscience or even second thought. In my home city, there is a positive statute against smoking on the street cars and busses. Yet I find persons who are enroute to church and who break that law. My Bible tells me that I'm to be subject to the ordinances of the land. I do not want to become a slave to anything which will keep me from obeying the word of the Lord and the laws of the state.

But there is another reason. I have a great many friends who are addicted to the use of the weed. Yet I have never talked to a single one of them who did not admit that the practice constituted a filthy habit. I submit then, that if those who indulge most freely admit that it is filthy, I cannot obey the injunction to cleanse myself from all filthiness of the flesh and hang on to something which overpowers and masters me, and brings me into cowering subjection as an abject slave. Why not clean house? I'm sure the Holy Spirit does not want it's temple to look or smell like an old-fashioned smoke house!

I'm opposed to the use of alcoholic liquor. I know and you know that in spite of all the advertising on the radio, in the newspapers, on the billboards and in magazines, that liquor is still what it has always been. Shakespeare regretted in his day that men would put into their mouths that which would steal away their brains. And from his day to this the effect has been the same. You can call the place where it is sold a cocktail lounge, but it is still a saloon. You can gild it and paint it and fix it up in brilliance, but you cannot get rid of the sordid effects that are engendered by the use of the product that is sold. I charge that liquor today is the cause of untold misery, want and woe. It is guilty before the bar of justice of murder, rape, lust and crime of every description. It ruins the bodies, defiles the spirits and loses the souls of those who are brought under its

influence. It makes of the body a hog pen for Satan's dwelling, the while it grieves the Spirit of God and drives it forth from the life of the one who imbibes. The New Testament says, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be ye filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). That means you can get too much of "spirits" but you cannot get enough of the Spirit of God to hurt you. The more of it you have the better man you are going to be.

Perhaps you have been guilty of impure, ungodly and corrupt thinking. Your mind may have been a moral sewer into which all sorts of corruption emptying created a swamp filled with the detestable and despicable ideas, awaiting opportunity to be translated into deeds as foul as the thoughts. Clean up! Much of the impure thinking of today is the result of the reading habits of men. Upon our newsstands there appear all sorts of hell-inspired literature, suggestive to the extreme, damnable in influence. Shun those things. It is too bad indeed that the law does not force those who sell and purvey such moral trash to put up a sign with skull and crossbones and the glaring word in red, "POISON." For if it is necessary in our pharmacies and apothecary shops to protect the bodies of men from the danger of that which destroys, how much more important is it to take adequate steps to guard against the destruction of their mental fibers.

I recall once when we were driving through the west, we stopped at a pool of water by the side of the road. A sign was posted there in letters that could not be overlooked. It said in appropriate fashion, "WARNING! This water is poison! Not fit for human consumption!" And that is the label which should be affixed to a lot of the stuff now being sold under the guise of literature. It is unfit for human consumption. It might be all right for the brute beasts if they could read, but for man made in the image of God, it should be held in utter contempt. If you have been guilty of using the precious golden hours of time which God has loaned you in the absorption of that kind of stuff, it's time for a housecleaning. Why not clean up and stay clean?

This old world is filled with lust and evil desire. Paul says, “Flee fornication. Every other sin that a man doeth is without the body, but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” That is the passage in which he introduces the thought that the Spirit dwells in our mortal bodies and consequently he reasons we have no right to use those bodies in any God-dishonoring, Spirit-defiling way! If you have been guilty of such things, clean up your life. Why live in a swamp of degradation, when you can build your house on the higher ground of clean living?

The body is kin to earth, but the Spirit is akin to God. It was the intention of the heavenly Father that the body should serve the Spirit and not the Spirit the body. The gravity of such sins and gluttony, intemperance and lust is that they reverse the divine order. This always means a loss of true manhood and results in inevitable suffering. It was Cicero, who wrote, “Hold off from sensuality, for if you once give yourself to it you will not be able to think of anything else.” And that is true. The body which was intended to be the royal temple of the Spirit becomes instead a dungeon, and then eventually a tomb. The drunkard reeling down the street is all too often a man whose body is just the sepulcher in which are buried his one-time hopes; a grave in which will be found the decaying thoughts that once gave him pleasure.

Start your housecleaning today. Don’t put it off.

The Devil's Trademark

Ensign 8 (September 1989): 143

Ensign

You are all familiar with our American word “trademark.” You know that it is a specific word or symbol, generally registered in Washington, which can be used only upon the products of one firm. It is therefore distinctive aid cannot be used to designate another producer’s goods. It belongs to one organization only. It must not be copied, borrowed or infringed upon by any other individual or institution.

Almost everything we purchase these days is packaged under a trademark. From coffee to canned asparagus, from clothing to codfish, from oleomargarine to oatmeal, everything has something about the package which may tell without even looking at the maker’s name, who has offered it for sale. It requires the activity constantly of a great host of people to keep up the bureau in which these trademarks are registered.

It seems to me that in spiritual realms, there may also be trademarks. A mere sight of such should tell us who originated the article or habit. I believe that Satan has a trademark which he stamps upon all of his goods, and since his chief purpose is to deceive the unwary, this trademark will be one which is calculated to achieve that result. What is the one thing which you always find characteristic of the devil’s wares? What deceives so many into purchasing these things, at such a high price, sometime even at the cost of honor, life and purity? If I

were called upon to decide what constitutes the most familiar brand or mark upon all of hell's packages, I am sure that I would without hesitancy say it consists of two words. And those two words are familiar to you. They are just little words, for the trademark of Satan, the slogan which he has devised is found in the famous expression "No harm."

I have yet to find a member of the church who wanted to indulge in something that was questionable and who did not first seek to justify the course of action, by saying, "Well, I don't really see any harm in it." In spite of the fact that many have been led astray by certain things, that souls have been lost and lives sullied with sin, there are still many who say about the things which wreaked the dire results, "Oh, there's no harm in that." You know we have in this country what is called a "pure food and drug act." It is the purpose of such to guarantee that products which are sold for human consumption shall be absolutely as represented. If there is anything harmful about the use of them, it must be specified on the label. If there is poison in it, the package must be labelled in red letters "Poison." That is indeed a great protection for the unwary. And that is the diabolical part of Satan's labels. They all say "No harm" when the product is poison of the very worst kind. And too often those who become habituated to the use of such things find themselves in the coils of a serpent from which they cannot free their lives, almost before they realize it.

A few days ago, I was talking to a young lady who formerly was a member of the church. She took an interest in those days in the Bible studies, and was always on time with her assigned recitation. By and by, she became involved with a crowd that were not concerned with the things that really count in life. She worked with them at a public place, and they began to invite her to go with them to various resorts of one kind and another. At first, she refused to do so. But they told her, "Oh, you don't want to go on all of your life being unpopular in society. You'll have to step out of your drab, humdrum existence if you're going to

be anything worthwhile.” She was persuaded to go to a dance at a night club, and was told there was no harm in it. She said that her conscience condemned her at first, but after awhile the seductiveness of the tempter had full sway, and the result was she could go with as much abandon as anyone. She was married, divorced, and now says that her entire life is ruined! Satan sold her a bill of goods and she bought them on the strength of his trademark, “No harm.”

The news releases recently told of a young man whose parents sacrificed a great deal to put him through grade and high schools. Then he took a course in accounting with money that he derived from the sale of calves which his father had given him down on the farm. Being upright, he was offered a job with a broker’s firm when he had completed his course. There were other young men there who had not had the early training of our friend. They spent their time and money at the race track. At first, the lad from the country would not go. But after awhile his reticence was overcome and his reserve battered down, by their constant attempts to get him to attend the races with them. They told him there was “No harm” in just going.

Upon his first trip, one of the men asked him to bet. He knew nothing about horse racing and gambling, so refused to be inveigled into placing any money. But the companion insisted and finally placed a bet, and told him if it was successful, they would divide the money. He said there is “No harm” since you do not have any money invested. They won. The fever of speculation got into the veins of the boy who had been taught better. He became a devotee of the tracks. He lost money— more money than he could afford to lose. And finally he could borrow no more. He felt that he must do something. The voice of the tempter whispered that his luck would change, if he would just stay with it. He took money out of the firm and covered up the loss with entries that were false. And then one day the auditors came in and caught him red-handed, and unprepared. He’s in the penitentiary! There was “No harm.” A life is ruined, a gray

haired father and mother are brought down in sorrow to their graves. Why can we not see through the devices of Satan?

I know there are those who point to the wicked when they prosper and tell us that such seem to be getting along all right. They mention that there does not seem to be any harm accruing to them. But I want to read for you the words of the wisest monarch who ever sat upon an earthly throne, “Though a sinner do evil and hundred times and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him; but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God” (Eccles. 8:12, 13). Don’t let anyone tell you that there is no harm in sin. The Old Book declares, “The way of the transgressor is hard.”

With regard to certain metals, textiles and other articles of commerce a test is sometime proposed which requires the use of acid. It is the purpose of such a test to determine the reliability of claims made for such products. We call this final test, the “acid test.” Now everything that we say or do, should be subjected to the acid test of God’s Word. I would like to propose today such a test for all of your conduct. When you are tempted to go to a place that is questionable, ask yourself the question, “Would Jesus go here if he were in my place?” If you are tempted to tell something or to utter a sentence that might have the wrong effect, why not ask, “Would Jesus tell it if he were in my place?” And if Jesus would not tell or do those things then you have no business mixing or mingling with them either. They cannot pass the acid test. Let them alone!

Occasionally one will assert that he believes it is all right to do something because his heart does not condemn him for doing it. That is not a proper test at all. In the first place, the Bible says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it” (Jer. 17:9)? Again the word of the Lord affirms, “There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but

the ends thereof is the way of death.” When Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of the church, hauling innocent men and women into prison on no other charge than they were believers in Jesus of Nazareth, his heart did not condemn him. He gave consent to the death of these people and did it gladly because he thought he was doing God service. He stood there with the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, lying at his feet, and consented unto the death of this just man, because he was justified by his own conscience. He later declared, “I verily thought that I should do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.” The acid test is not that of belief or conscience, for both of these may be wrong. The only safe guide, the infallible test, is the Bible. It cannot be wrong for it contains the will of God and was given as an incontrovertible testimony to the truth and the truth alone!

Beware of the thing which comes to you with the label “No harm” when a question exists. There are those who will tell you that there is no harm in taking a little drink of intoxicating liquor. Yet it must be remembered that every drunkard and sot, who lies in the gutter, wallowing in the filth of his own vomit, also thought that very thing once in his life. “Great oaks from little acorns grow.” Life shattering practices start with one act of indiscretion. “Sow a thought, and reap an act; sow an act, and reap a habit; sow a habit and you’ll reap a character.” Be careful about the first time and there will not be a last time.

The purpose of the devil is to deceive humanity. He has no other desire; no other goal. He is never happy unless securing the fall of one who has previously been serving the Lord God of heaven. Upon the bargain counter of the world’s desires, he spreads his enticing wares. Look at the trademarks. Examine the contents. Remember that if you taste the sample it may overpower your sense of judgment. So be careful as you tread the highway of life. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Don’t be deluded, enticed, and seduced by the all-too familiar lie, “No Harm In It.”

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